

EMMA FRANCES DAWSON



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AN ITINERANT HOUSE

AND OTHER STORIES







# AN ITINERANT HOUSE

AND OTHER STORIES

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EMMA FRANCES DAWSON  
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERNEST C. PEIXOTTO  
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## PREFACE

The romance of "A Gracious Visitation," and the "prose poem": "In Silver Upon Purple" are new.

The other tales appear here by kind permission of the "Argonaut," the "Wasp," the "Overland," and "Short Stories," which gave a prize for "the best Queer etching" to "The Night Before the Wedding."

The dreams in "Singed Moths" are not fiction.





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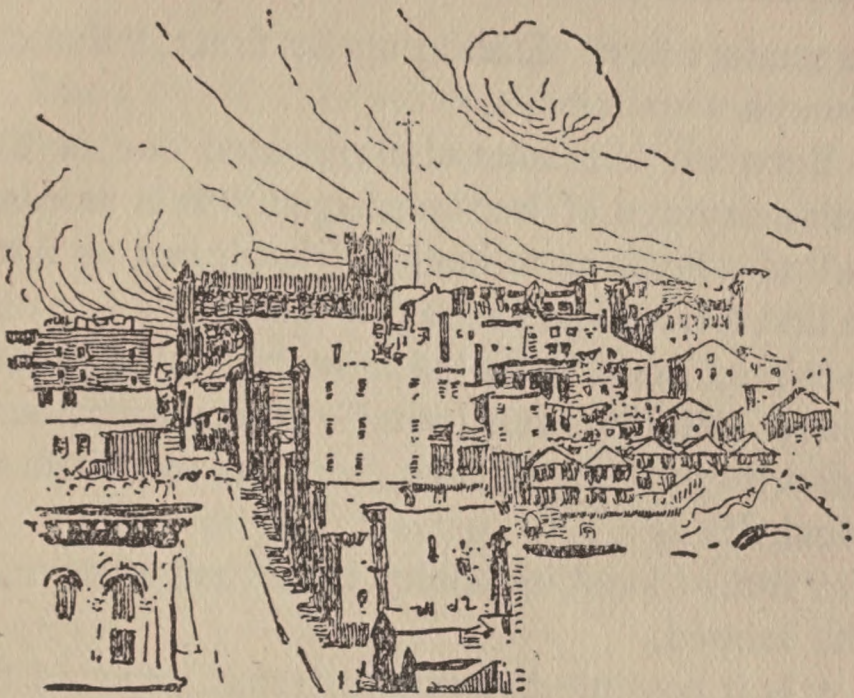




AN ITINERANT HOUSE.







## AN ITINERANT HOUSE.

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"Eternal longing with eternal pain,  
Want without hope, and memory saddening all,  
All congregated failure and despair  
Shall wander there through some old maze of wrong."

"His *wife*?" cried Felipa.

"Yes," I answered, unwillingly; for until the steamer brought Mrs. Anson I believed in this Mexican woman's right to that name. I felt sorry for the bright eyes and kind heart that had cheered Anson's lodgers through weary months of early days in San Francisco.

She burst into tears. None of us knew how



to comfort her. Dering spoke first: "Beauty always wins friends."

Between her sobs she repeated one of the pithy sayings of her language: "It is as easy to find a lover as to keep a friend, but as hard to find a friend as to keep a lover."

"Yes," said Volz, "a new friendship is like a new string to your guitar—you are not sure what its tone may prove, nor how soon it may break."

"But at least its falsity is learned at once," she sobbed.

"Is it possible," I asked, "that you had no suspicion?"

"None. He told me—" She ended in a fresh gust of tears.

"The old story," muttered Dering. "Marryatt's skipper was right in thinking everything that once happened would come again somewhere."

Anson came. He had left the new-comer at the Niantic, on pretense of putting his house in order. Felipa turned on him before we could go.

"Is this true?" she cried.

Without reply he went to the window and stood looking out. She sprang toward him, with rage distorting her face.



“Coward!” she screamed, in fierce scorn.

Then she fell senseless. Two doctors were called. One said she was dead. The other, at first doubtful, vainly tried hot sealing-wax and other tests. After thirty-six hours her funeral was planned. Yet Dering, once medical student, had seen an electric current used in such a case in Vienna, and wanted to try it. That night, he, Volz, and I offered to watch. When all was still, Dering, who had smuggled in the simple things needed, began his weird work.

“Is it not too late?” I asked.

“Every corpse,” said he, “can be thus excited soon after death, for a brief time only, and but once. If the body is not lifeless, the electric current has power at any time.”

Volz, too nervous to stay near, stood in the door open to the dark hall. It was a dreadful sight. The dead woman’s breast rose and fell; smiles and frowns flitted across her face.

“The body begins to react finely,” cried Dering, making Volz open the windows, while I wrapped hot blankets round Felipa, and he instilled clear coffee and brandy.

“It seems like sacrilege! Let her alone!” I exclaimed. “Better dead than alive!”

“My God! say not that!” cried Volz; “the



nerve which hears is last to die. She may know all we say."

"Musical bosh!" I muttered.

"Perhaps not," said Dering; "in magnetic sleep that nerve can be roused."

The night seemed endless. The room gained an uncanny look, the macaws on the gaudy, old-fashioned wall-paper seemed fluttering and changing places. Volz crouched in a heap near the door. Dering stood by Felipa, watching closely. I paced the shadowy room, looked at the gleam of the moon on the bay, listened to the soughing wind in the gum-trees mocking the sea, and tried to recall more cheerful scenes, but always bent under the weight of that fearful test going on beside me. Where was her soul? Beyond the stars, in the room with us, or "like trodden snowdrift melting in the dark?" Volz came behind, startling me by grasping my elbow.

"Shall I not play?" he whispered. "Familiar music is remembrance changed to sound — it brings the past as perfume does. Gypsy music in her ear would be like holding wild flowers to her nostrils."

"Ask Dering," I said; "he will know best."

I heard him urging Dering.



“She has gypsy blood,” he said; “their music will rouse her.”

Dering unwillingly agreed. “But nothing abrupt—begin low,” said he.

Vaguely uneasy, I turned to object; but Volz had gone for his violin. Far off arose a soft, wavering, sleepy strain, like a wind blowing over a field of poppies. He passed, in slow, dramatic style, through the hall, playing on the way. As he came in, oddly sustained notes trembled like sighs and sobs; these were by degrees subdued, though with spasmodic outbursts, amid a grand movement as of phantom shapes through cloud-land. One heart-rending phrase recurring as of one of the shadowy host striving to break loose, but beaten back by impalpable throngs, numberless grace-notes trailing their sparks like fireworks. No music of our intervals and our rhythms, but perplexing in its charm like a draught that maddens. Time, space, our very identities, were consumed in this white heat of sound. I held my breath. I caught his arm.

“It is too bold and distracting,” I cried. “It is enough to kill us! Do you expect to torment her back? How can it affect us so?”

“Because,” he answered, laying down his violin and wiping his brow, “in the gypsy



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minor scale the fourth and seventh are augmented. The sixth is diminished. The frequent augmentation of the fourth makes that sense of unrest."

"Bah! Technical terms make it no plainer," I said, returning to the window.

He played a whispered, merry discordance, resolving into click of castanets, laugh, and dance of a gypsy camp. Out of the whirl of flying steps and tremolo of tambourines rose a tender voice, asking, denying, sighing, imploring, passing into an over-ruling, long-drawn call that vibrated in widening rings to reach the farthest horizon—nay, beyond land or sea, "east of the sun, west of the moon." With a rush returned the wild jollity of men's bass laughter, women's shrill reply, the stir of the gypsy camp. This dropped behind vague, rolling measures of clouds and chaos, where to and fro floated grotesque goblins of grace-notes like the fancies of a madman; struggling, rising, falling, vain-reaching strains; fierce cries like commands. The music seemed another vital essence thrilling us with its own emotion.

"No more, no more!" I cried, half gasping, and grasping Volz's arm. "What is it, Der-  
ing?"

He had staggered from the bed and was try-









ing to see his watch. "It is just forty-four hours!" he said, pointing to Felipa.

Her eyes were open! We were alarmed as if doing wrong and silently watched her. Fifteen minutes later her lips formed one word:

"Idiots!"

Half an hour after she flung the violin from bed to floor, but would not speak. People began to stir about the house. The prosaic sounds jarred on our strained nerves. We felt brought from another sphere. Volz and I were going, but Felipa's upraised hand kept us. She sat up, looking a ghastly vision. Turning first toward me she quoted my words:

"'Better dead than alive!' True. You knew I would be glad to die. What right had you to bring me back? God's curses on you! I was dead. Then came agony. I heard your voices. I thought we were all in hell. Then I found how by your evil cunning I was to be forced to live. It was like an awful nightmare. I shall not forget you, nor you me. These very walls shall remember—here, where I have been so tortured no one shall have peace! Fools! Leave me! Never come in this room again!"

We went, all talking at once, Dering angry



at her mood; Volz, sorry he had not reached a soothing *pianissimo* passage; I, owning we had no right to make the test. We saw her but once more, when with a threatening nod toward us she left the house.

From that time a gloom settled over the place. Mrs. Anson proved a hard-faced, cold-hearted, Cape Cod woman, a scold and drudge, who hated us as much as we disliked her. Home-sick and unhappy, she soon went East and died. Within a year, Anson was found dead where he had gone hunting in the Saucelito woods, supposed a suicide; Dering was hung by the Vigilantes, and the rest were scattered on the four winds. Volz and I were last to go. The night before we sailed, he for Australia, I for New York, he said:

“I am sorry for those who come after us in this house.”

“Not knowing of any tragedy here,” I said, “they will not feel its influence.”

“They must feel it,” he insisted; “it is written in the Proverbs, ‘Evil shall not depart from his house.’”

Some years later, I was among passengers embarking at New York for California, when there was a cry of “Man overboard!” In the confusion of his rescue, among heartless and



pitiful talk, I overheard one man declare that the drowned might be revived.

“Oh, yes!” cried a well-known voice behind me. “But they might not thank you.”

I turned—to find Volz! He was coming out with Wynne, the actor. Enjoying our comradeship on the voyage, on reaching San Francisco we took rooms together, on Bush Street, in an old house with a large garden. Volz became leader of the orchestra, and Wynne, leading man at the same theatre. Lest my folks, a Maine deacon’s family, should think I was on the road to ruin, I told in letters home only of the city missionary in the house.

Volz was hard worked. Wynne was not much liked. My business went wrong. It rained for many weeks; to this we laid the discomfort that grew to weigh on us. Volz wreaked his sense of it on his violin, adding to the torment of Wynne and myself, for to lonesome anxious souls “the demon in music” shows horns and cloven foot in the trying sounds of practice. One Sunday Volz played the “Witches Dance,” the “Dream,” and “The long, long weary day.”

“I can bear it no longer!” said Wynne.



"I feel like the haunted Matthias in 'The Bells.' If I could feel so when acting such parts, it would make my fortune. But I feel it only here."

"I think," said Volz, "it is the *gloria fonda* bush near the window; the scent is too strong." He dashed off Strauss' fretful, conflicting "Hurry and Delay."

"There, there! It is too much," said I. "You express my feelings."

He looked doubtful. "Put it in words," said he.

"How can I?" I said. "When our firm sent me abroad, I went sight-seeing among old palaces, whose Gobelin tapestries framed in their walls were faded to gray phantoms of pictures, but out of some the thrilling eyes followed me till I could not stay in their range. My feeling here is the uneasy one of being watched."

"Ha!" said Volz. "You remind me of Heine, when he wrote from Livorno. He knew no Italian, but the old palaces whispered secrets unheard by day. The moon was interpreter, knew the lapidary style, translated to dialect of his heart."

"Strange effects after the moon," mused Wynne. "That gives new meaning to Kent's



threat: 'I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you!'"

Volz went on: "Heine wrote: 'The stones here speak to me, and I know their mute language. Also, they seem deeply to feel what I think. So a broken column of the old Roman times, an old tower of Lombardy, a weather-beaten Gothic piece of a pillar understands me well. But I am a ruin myself, wandering among ruins.'"

"Perhaps, like Poe's hero," said I, "'I have imbibed shadows of fallen columns at Balbec, and Tadmor, and Persepolis, until my very soul has become a ruin.'"

"But I, too," said Wynne, "feel the unrest of Tannhauser:

'Alas! what seek I here, or anywhere,  
Whose way of life is like the crumbled stair  
That winds and winds about a ruined tower,  
And leads no whither.'"

"I am oppressed," Volz owned, "as if some one in my presence was suffering deeply."

"I feel," said Wynne, "as if the scene was not set right for the performance now going on. There is a hitch and drag somewhere—scene-shifters on a strike. Happy are you poets and musicians, who can express what is vague."



Volz laughed. "As in Liszt's oratorio of 'Christus,'" said he, "where a sharp, ear-piercing *sostenuto* on the piccolo-flute shows the shining of the star of Bethlehem." He turned to me. "Schubert's 'Wanderer' always recalls to me a house you and I know to be under a ban."

"Haunted?" asked Wynne. "Of all speculative theories, St. Martin's sends the most cold thrills up one's back. He said none of the dead come back, but some stay."

"What we Germans call *gebannt*—tied to one spot," said Volz. "But this is no ghost, only a proof of what a German psychologist holds, that the magnetic man is a spirit."

"Go on, 'and tell quaint lies'—I like them," said Wynne.

I told in brief outline, with no names, the tale Volz and I knew, while we strolled to Telegraph Hill, passing five streets blocked by the roving houses common to San Francisco.

Wynne said: "They seem to have minds of their own, with their entrances and exits in a *moving* drama."

"Sort of 'Poor Jo's,'" said I.

"Castles in chess," said Volz.

"Io-like," said Wynne, "with a gad in their hearts that forever drives them on."



A few foreign sailors lounged on the hill top, looking at the view. The wind blew such a gale we did not stay. The steps we had known, cut in the side, were gone. Where the old house used to be, goats were browsing.

“Perchance we do inhabit it but now,” mockingly cried Wynne; “methinks it must be so.”

“Then,” said Volz, thoughtfully, “it might be what Germans call ‘far-working’—acted in distance—that affects us.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. “Do you know anything of her now?”

“I know she went to Mexico,” said he; “that is all.”

“What is ‘far-working?’” asked Wynne. “If I could act in the distance, and here too—‘what larks!’”

“Yes—‘if,’” said I. “Think how all our lives turn on that pivot. Suppose Hawthorne’s offer to join Wilkes’ exploring expedition had been taken!”

“Only to wills that know no ‘if’ is ‘far-working’ possible,” said Volz. “Substance or space can no more hinder this force than the one of mineral magnetism. Passavent joins it with pictures falling, or watches stopping at the time of a death. In sleep-walking,



some kinds of illness, or nearness of death, the nervous ether is not so closely allied to its material conductors, the nerves, and may be loosened to act from afar, the surest where blood or feeling makes attraction or repulsion."

Wynne in the two voices of the play repeated:

"VICTOR.—Where is the gentleman?

CHISPE.—As the old song says:

'His body is in Segovia,  
His soul is in Madrid.'"

We could learn about the house we were in only that five families had moved in and out during the last year. Wynne resolved to shake off the gloom that wrapped us. In struggles to defy it, he on the strength of a thousand-dollar benefit, made one payment on the house and began repairs.

On an off-night he was vainly trying to study a new part. Volz advised the relief to his nerves of reciting the dream scene from "The Bells," reminding him he had compared it with his restlessness there. Wynne denied it.

"Yes," said Volz, "where the mesmerizer forces Matthias to confess."

But Wynne refused, as if vexed, till Volz offered to show in music his own mood, and I



agreed to read some rhymes about mine. Volz was long tuning his violin.

“I feel,” he said, “as if the passers-by would hear a secret. Music is such a subtle expression of emotion—like flower-odor rolls far and affects the stranger. Harken! In Heine’s ‘Reisebilder,’ as the cross was thrown ringing on the banquet table of the gods, they grew dumb and pale, and even paler till they melted in mist. So shall you at the long-drawn wail of my violin grow breathless, and fade from each other’s sight.”

The music closed round us, and we waited in its deep solitude. One brief, sad phrase fell from airy heights to lowest depths into a sea of sound, whose harmonious eddies as they widened breathed of passion and pain, now swooning, now reviving, with odd pauses and sighs that rose to cries of despair, but the tormenting first strain recurring fainter and fainter, as if drowning, drowning, drowned—yet floating back for repeated last plaint, as if not to be quelled, and closing, as it began, the whole.

As I read the name of my verses, Volz murmured: “*Les Nuits Blanches*. No. 4. Stephen Heller.”



## SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.

Against the garden's mossy paling  
I lean, and wish the night away,  
Whose faint, unequal shadows trailing  
Seem but a dream of those of day.

Sleep burdens blossom, bud, and leaf,  
My soul alone aspires, dilates,  
Yearns to forget its care and grief —  
No bath of sleep its pain abates.

How dread these dreams of wide-eyed nights!  
What is, and is not, both I rue,  
My wild thoughts fly like wand'ring kites,  
No peace falls with this balmy dew.

Through slumb'rous stillness, scarcely stirred  
By sudden trembles, as when shifts  
O'er placid pool some skimming bird,  
Its Lethean bowl a poppy lifts.

If one deep draught my doubts could solve,  
The world might bubble down its brim,  
Like Cleopatra's pearl dissolve,  
With all my dreams within its rim.

What should I know but calm repose?  
How feel, recalling this lost sphere?  
Alas! the fabled poppy shows  
Upon its bleeding heart — a tear!

Wynne unwillingly began to recite: “‘I  
fear nothing, but dreams are dreams —’”

He stammered, could not go on, and fell to  
the floor. We got him to bed. He never



spoke sanely after. His wild fancies appalled us watching him all night.

“Avaunt Sathanas! That’s not my cue,” he muttered. “A full house to-night. How could Talma forget how the crowd looked, and fancy it a pack of skeletons? Tell Volz to keep the violins playing through this scene, it works me up as well as thrills the audience. Oh, what tiresome nights I have lately, always dreaming of scenes where rival women move, as in ‘Court and Stage,’ where, all masked, the king makes love to Frances Stewart before the queen’s face! How do I try to cure it? ‘And being thus frightened, swear a prayer or two and sleep again.’ Madame, you’re late; you’ve too little rouge; you’ll look ghastly. We’re not called yet; let’s rehearse our scene. Now, then, I enter left, pass to the window. You cry ‘is this true?’ and faint. All crowd about. Quick curtain.”

Volz and I looked at each other.

“Can our magnetism make his senses so sharp that he knows what is in our minds?” he asked me.

“Nonsense!” I said. “Memory, laudanum, and whisky.”

“There,” Wynne went on, “the orchestra



is stopping. They've rung up the curtain. Don't hold me. The stage waits, yet how can I go outside my door to step on dead bodies? Street and sidewalk are knee-deep with them. They rise and curse me for disturbing them. I lift my cane to strike. It turns to a snake, whose slimy body writhes in my hand. Trying to hold it from biting me, my nails cut my palm till blood streams to drown the snake."

He awed us not alone from having no control of his thoughts, but because there came now and then a strange influx of emotion as if other souls passed in and out of his body.

"Is this hell?" he groaned. "What blank darkness! Where am I? What is that infernal music haunting me through all space? If I could only escape it I need not go back to earth—to that room where I feel choked, where the very wall paper frets me with its flaunting birds flying to and fro, mocking my fettered state. 'Here, here in the very den of the wolf!' Hallo, Benvolio, call-boy's hunting you. Romeo's gone on.

'See where he steals—

Locked in some gloomy covert under key

Of cautionary silence, with his arms

Threaded, like these cross-boughs, in sorrow's knot.'



What is this dread that weighs like a nightmare? 'I do not fear; like Macbeth, I only inhabit trembling.' 'For one of them—she is in hell already, and burns, poor soul! For the other'—Ah! must I die here, alone in the woods, felled by a coward, Indian-like, from behind a tree? None of the boys will know. 'I just now come from a whole world of mad women that had almost—what, is she dead?' Poor Felipa!"

"Did you tell him her name?" I asked Volz.

"No," said he. "Can one man's madness be another's real life?"

"Blood was spilt—the avenger's wing hovered above my house," raved Wynne. "What are these lights, hundreds of them—serpent's eyes? Is it the audience—coiled, many-headed monster, following me round the world? Why do they hiss? I've played this part a hundred times. 'Taught by Rage, and Hunger, and Despair?' Do they, full-fed, well-clothed, light-hearted, know how to judge me? 'A plague on both your houses!' What is that flame? Fire that consumes my vitals—spon-ta-neous combustion! It is then possible. Water! water!"

The doctor said there had been some great strain on Wynne's mind. He sank fast,



though we did all we could. Toward morning I turned to Volz with the words:

“He is dead.”

The city missionary was passing the open door. He grimly muttered:

“Better dead than alive!”

“My God! say not that!” cried Volz. “The nerve which hears is last to die. He may know——”

He faltered. We stood aghast. The room grew suddenly familiar. I tore off a strip of the gray tint on the walls. Under it we found the old paper with its bright macaws.

“Ah, ha!” Volz said; “will you now deny my theory of ‘far-working?’”

Dazed, I could barely murmur: “Then people *can* be affected by it!”

“Certainly,” said he, “as rubbed glasses gain electric power.”

Within a week we sailed—he for Brazil, I for New York.

Several years after, at Sacramento, Arne, an artist I had known abroad, found me on the overland train, and on reaching San Francisco urged me to go where he lodged.

“I am low-spirited here,” he said; “I don’t know why.”



I stopped short on the crowded wharf.  
“Where do you live?” I asked.

“Far up Market Street,” said he.

“What sort of a house?” I insisted.

“Oh—nothing modern—over a store,” he answered.

Reassured, I went with him. He lived in a jumble of easels, portfolios, paint, canvas, bits of statuary, casts, carvings, foils, red curtains, Chinese goatskins, woodcuts, photographs, sketches, and unfinished pictures. On the wall hung a scene from “The Wandering Jew,” as we saw it at the Adelphi, in London, where in the Arctic regions he sees visions foreshadowing the future of his race. Under it was quoted:

—“All in my mind is confused, nor can I  
dissever

The mould of the visible world from the shape of my  
thought in me—

The Inward and Outward are fused, and through them  
murmur forever

The sorrow whose sound is the wind and the roar of  
the limitless sea.”

“Do you remember,” Arne asked, “when we saw that play? Both younger and more hopeful. How has the world used you? As for me, I have done nothing since I came here



but that sketch, finished months ago. I have not lost ambition, but I feel fettered."

"Absinthe?—opium?—tobacco?" I hinted.

"Neither," he answered. "I try to work, but visions, widely different from what I will, crowd on me, as on the Jew in the play. Not the unconscious brain action all thinkers know, but a dictation from without. No rush of creative impulses, but a dragging sense of something else I ought to paint."

"Briefly," I said, "you are a 'Haunted Man.'"

"Haunted by a willful design," said he. "I feel as if something had happened somewhere which I *must* show."

"What is it like?" I asked.

"I wish I could tell you," he replied. "But only odd bits change places, like looking in a kaleidoscope; yet all cluster around one centre."

One day, looking over his portfolios, I found an old *Temple Bar*, which he said he kept for this passage—which he read to me—from T. A. Trollope's "Artist's Tragedy:"

"The old walls and ceilings and floors must be saturated with the exhalations of human emotions! These lintels, doorways, and stairs have become, by long use and homeliness, dear to human hearts, and



have become so intimately blended a portion of the mental furniture of human lives, that they have contributed their part to the formation of human characters. Such facts and considerations have gone to the fashioning of the mental habitudes of all of us. If all could have been recorded! If emotion had the property of photographing itself on the surfaces of the walls which had witnessed it! Even if only passion, when translated into acts, could have done so! Ah, what palimpsests! What deciphering of tangled records! What skillful separation of successive layers of 'passionography!'"

"I know a room," said Arne, "thronged with acts that elbow me from my work and fill me with unrest."

I looked at him in mute surprise.

"I suppose," he went on, "such things do not interest you."

"No—yes," I stammered. "I have marked in traveling how lonely houses change their expression as you come near, pass, and leave them. Some frown, others smile. The Bible buildings had life of their own and human diseases; the priests cursed or blessed them as men."

"Houses seem to remember," said he. "Some rooms oppress us with a sense of lives that have been lived in them."

"That," I said, "is like Draper's theory



of shadows on walls always staying. He shows how after a breath passes over a coin or key, its spectral outline remains for months after the substance is removed. But can the mist of circumstance sweeping over us make our vacant places hold any trace of us?"

"Why not? Who can deny it? Why do you look at me so?" he asked.

I could not tell him the sad tale. I hesitated; then said: "I was thinking of Volz, a friend I had, who not only believed in what Bulwer calls 'a power akin to mesmerism and superior to it, once called Magic, and that it might reach over the dead, so far as their experience on earth,' but also in animal magnetism from any distance."

Arne grew queerly excited. "If Time and Space exist but in our thoughts, why should it not be true?" said he. "Macdonald's lover cries, 'That which has been is, and the Past can never cease. She is mine, and I shall find her—what matters it when, or where, or how?'" He sighed. "In Acapulco, a year ago, I saw a woman who has been before me ever since—the centre of the circling, changing, crude fancies that trouble me."

"Did you know her?" I asked.

'No, nor anything about her, not even her



name. It is like a spell. I must paint her before anything else, but I cannot yet decide how. I feel sure she has played a tragic part in some life-drama."

"Swinburne's queen of panthers," I hinted.

"Yes. But I was not in love. Love I must forego. I am not a man with an income."

"I know you are not a nincompoop!" I said, always trying to change such themes by a jest. I could not tell him I knew a place which had the influence he talked of. I could not re-visit that house.

Soon after he told me he had begun his picture, but would not show it. He complained that one figure kept its back toward him. He worked on it till he fell ill. Even then he hid it. "Only a layer of passionography," he said.

I grew restless. I thought his mood affected mine. It was a torment as well as a puzzle to me that his whole talk should be of the influence of houses, rooms, even personal property that had known other owners. Once I asked him if he had anything like the brown coat Sheridan swore drew ill-luck to him.

"Sometimes I think," he answered, "it is this special brown paint artists prize which affects me. It is made from the best asphal-



tum, and that can be got only from Egyptian mummy-cloths. Very likely dust of the mummies is ground in it. I ought to feel their ill-will."

One day I went to Saucelito. In the still woods I forgot my unrest till coming to the stream where, as I suddenly remembered, Anson was found dead, a dread took me which I tried to lose by putting into rhyme. Turning my pockets at night, I crumpled the page I had written on, and threw it on the floor.

In uneasy sleep I dreamed I was again in Paris, not where I liked to recall being, but at "Bullier's," and in war-time. The bald, spectacled leader of the orchestra, leaning back, shamming sleep, while a dancing, stamping, screaming crowd wave tri-colored flags, and call for the "Chant du Depart." Three thousand voices in a rushing roar that makes the twenty thousand lights waver, in spasmodic but steady chorus:

"Les departs—parts—parts!  
Les departs—parts—parts!  
Les departs—parts—parts!"

Roused, I supposed by passing rioters, I did not try to sleep again, but rose to write a letter for the early mail. As I struck a light I saw, smoothed out on the table, the wrinkled page I



had cast aside. The ink was yet wet on two lines added to each verse. A chill crept over me as I read:

## FOREST MURMURS.

Across the woodland bridge I pass,  
And sway its three long, narrow planks,  
To mark how gliding waters glass  
Bright blossoms doubled ranks on ranks;  
And how through tangle of the ferns  
Floats incense from veiled flower-urns,  
What would the babbling brook reveal?  
What may these trembling depths conceal?  
*Dread secret of the dense woods, held  
With restless shudders horror-spelled!*

How shift the shadows of the wood,  
As if it tossed in troubled sleep!  
Strange whispers, vaguely understood,  
Above, below, around me creep;  
While in the sombre-shadowed stream  
Great scarlet splashes far down gleam,  
The odd-reflected, stately shapes  
Of cardinals in crimson capes;  
*Not those—but spectral pools of blood  
That stain these sands through strongest flood!*

Like blare of trumpets through black nights—  
Or sunset clouds before a storm—  
Are these red phantom water-sprites  
That mock me with fantastic form;  
With flitting of the last year's bird  
Fled ripples that its low flight stirred—



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How should these rushing waters learn  
Aught but the bend of this year's fern?  
*The lonesome wood, with bated breath,  
Hints of a hidden blow — and death!*

I could not stay alone. I ran to Arne's room. As I knocked, the falling of some light thing within made me think he was stirring. I went in. He sat in the moonlight, back to me before his easel. The picture on it might be the one he kept secret. I would not look. I went to his side and touched him. He had been dead for hours! I turned the unseen canvas to the wall.

Next day I packed and planned to go East. I paid the landlady not to send Arne's body to the morgue, and watched it that night, when a sudden memory swept over me like a tidal wave. There was a likeness in the room to one where I had before watched the dead. Yes — there were the windows, there the doors — just here stood the bed, in the same spot I sat. What wildness was in the air of San Francisco!

To put such crazy thoughts to flight I would look at Arne's last work. Yet I wavered, and more than once turned away after laying my hand on it. At last I snatched it, placed it on the easel and lighted the nearest gas-burner before looking at it. Then — great heavens!



How had this vision come to Arne? It was the scene where Felipa cursed us. Every detail of the room reproduced, even the gay birds on the wall-paper, and her flower-pots. The figures and faces of Dering and Volz were true as hers, and in the figure with averted face which Arne had said kept its back to him, I knew—myself! What strange insight had he gained by looking at Felipa? It was like the man who trembled before the unknown portrait of the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

How long I gazed at the picture I do not know. I heard, without heeding, the door-bell ring and steps along the hall. Voices. Some one looking at rooms. The landlady, saying this room was to let, but unwilling to show it, forced to own its last tenant lay there dead. This seemed no shock to the stranger.

“Well,” said her shrill tones, “poor as he was he’s better dead than alive!”

The door opened as a well-known voice cried: “My God! say not that! The nerve which hears is last to die—”

Volz stood before me! Awe-struck, we looked at each other in silence. Then he waved his hand to and fro before his eyes.

“Is this a dream?” he said. “There,” pointing to the bed; “you”—to me; “the



same words — the very room! Is it our fate?"

I pointed to the picture and to Arne. "The last work of this man, who thought it a fancy sketch?"

While Volz stood dumb and motionless before it, the landlady spoke:

"Then you know the place. Can you tell what ails it? There have been suicides in this room. No one prospers in the house. My cousin, who is a house-mover, warned me against taking it. He says before the store was put under it here it stood on Bush Street, and before that on Telegraph Hill."

Volz clutched my arm. "It is 'The Flying Dutchman' of a house!" he cried, and drew me fast down stairs and out into a dense fog which made the world seem a tale that was told, blotting out all but our two slanting forms, bent as by what poor Wynne would have called "a blast from hell," hurrying blindly away. I heard the voice of Volz as if from afar: "The magnetic man is a spirit!"



SINGED MOTHS.







## SINGED MOTHS.

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*In Yorkshire, England, night-moths are called souls.*

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Poor moth! thy fate my own resembles —

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

What gained we, little moth? Thy ashes

Thy one brief parting pang may show,

And withering thoughts for soul that dashes

From deep to deep are but a death more slow.

— *Carlyle's Tragedy of the Night-Moth.*

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### KATHARINE'S DIARY.

*June 21.*—Waiting for Elizabeth to-night, Charlotte and I sat in silence, unbroken save by the slight sounds of our work.

“While I pay court to a new ‘one-eyed despot,’ I want to ask if you have thought that this is Midsummer Eve?” I asked at last, with a scornful laugh, but feeling more like crying, as I stopped the sewing-machine for a new needle.

“No, is it?” Charlotte answered, with a long sigh, and soon looking up from her desk to add: “Now I have spoiled that sheet of legal-cap! You made me think of our lawn with colored lanterns, our lace dresses, wide



Roman sashes, diamonds and whole pearls, the kind men and fond women, and instead of 'City and County of San Francisco, ss.,' I wrote Strauss waltzes and strawberry-ices. How could you?"

"Well," said I, "I had been thinking all day of the change—our gloves and boots too shabby for daylight, hats years old, black silks that knew some of our old 'tea-fights' and have to be court-plastered like beaten pugilists, our dread to see things wear out or break because not sure of new ones, even what should pay car-fare kept for a loaf of bread."

"Our only caller," said Charlotte, "the landlady for her rent. Neither time nor money for books or papers. Theatre, concert, sail, and drive, joys for us no more than if we were ghosts."

"Shunned," said I, "except for insult, by those in our old rank of life, as if with our money went our culture, wit, sense, and purity."

"Innocent souls," said Charlotte, "forced to toil fourteen or sixteen hours a day, while the vile wretch at San Quentin works eight or ten, and sleeps with no care for food or rent."

"A steady grind of small economies," I



went on, "that are both comic and cruel—a struggle for ten cents' worth of flour, one candle, five cents' worth of sugar, seventy-five-cent boots, and twenty-five-cent gloves."

"Forced to think," said Charlotte, "of claims due the unyielding body, and forget there can be joys the spirit needs; that we ever knew sunrise parties on horseback, garden-shaded hammocks at noon, sea-sands at sunset, or serenades by moonlight."

"In San Francisco," said I, "we know neither the fire-side glow thrown on our old silver-laden side-board in winter, nor the foreign travel of our summers, nor the red and yellow woods of fall we saw from the marble-terrace overlooking our landscape garden, with its lake and Swiss cottage—where the trees looked as if seen through the stained windows of our great library."

"Outdoors," said she, "we see only wind-blown dust or rain; indoors, we know our work, and an hysterical sort of good spirits."

"Our past in the East," I said, "is gone like a dream; folks treat us as though with our lost money went our brains."

"Not all," said she.

"Only exceptions that prove the rule," I answered



After another hour of quiet, Charlotte lighted a fire, filled the tea-kettle, and spread the cloth.

"*We* will have a party supper," she said. "Elizabeth will be tired and hungry. If we had flour and a bit of suet (I have nearly forgotten what butter is), we could have some griddle cakes. If we had this or that, we could have the other. What will you have?—broiled chicken, custard pie, and citron cake?"

"Oyster soup, quail on toast, and an omelette soufflée," I replied—

'If wishes were horses, beggars might ride;  
If wishes were fishes, we'd have some fried.'

"Perhaps Elizabeth will bring something," said Charlotte, as she set a cup of milk and a five-cent loaf of bread on the table. "She was to get some sewing from the Wertley's—they may give her some cake."

"Don't!" I cried, it vexes my pride to take such gifts—yet I am so tired of potatoes and salt, and milk and water."

"And owing for the potatoes and milk," said Charlotte, grimly; "even the five dollars Elizabeth will get for playing for the Wertley's children's party ought to go—in how



many ways!—all to the grocer, or for rent, for coal, for milk, or to get dresses dyed, or——O dear! it is after eleven; she must come soon. Ah! here she is.”

Elizabeth came up stairs, tired and out of breath, with two small jars, which she set on the table, saying: “More frill and no shirt! Pickles and jam the housekeeper gave me. Good soul, she didn’t know what a farce it was, that we had nothing to eat with them, that the scent of dinner in houses I passed going there to-night made me feel ill.”!

We laughed, but our voices were full of tears.

“In the children’s lessons, to-day,” said Elizabeth, “we read (what I felt as they could not) about the pagan goddess of death, ‘Hel’—in the realm of the Cold Storm. Hunger is her table, Starvation her knife, Delay her man, Slowness her maid, Precipice her threshold, Care her bed, burning Anguish the hangings of her room.”

“Oh, don’t!” I cried; “the water boils; come, we will play it is tea—but we must sweeten it with smiles, as we have no sugar.”

“No one came to see the room, I suppose,” said Elizabeth, as we gathered round the table,



“though I answered the notice so quickly; nor any one to take lessons.”

“No,” said Charlotte, “nothing has happened except that Biddy has sent us some coal and wood.”

“Think of our old servant coming to own this house, and letting us the upper part—swelling round in a big fur cloak, and showing us charity! Bah!”

“Never mind,” said Charlotte, “her good heart gave her grace to say the fairies sent it. We are lucky to have such a friend—when I have got word that, as some one will do the work cheaper, this is the last of my copying.”

We all sighed.

“Elizabeth,” said I, “I thought Mrs. Wertley was to send some sewing by you.”

“Mrs. Wertley,” said Elizabeth, “did not like it because I played something more than dance-music when asked to by one of her guests, and outshone her daughter. So I have lost my place as governess.”

Charlotte and I groaned.

“Oh, Charlotte,” said Elizabeth, “haven’t you got some verses to read to us to-night?”

Charlotte searched her papers, and read:



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"BETTER DAYS.

"What pathos sounds within the common phrase  
On careless tongues: 'They have known better  
days!'

As if for them were dimmed this sun's gold rays,  
The dazzling miracle of winter's snow,  
The festal pomp of summer's blossom show  
Were seen by them through veil of sombre haze.

"God help poor souls on whom that burden lays!  
They walk through narrow, crooked, lonely ways,  
Look on their darkened life in sore amaze,  
To Care and Sorrow and Regret fast bound,  
To toil and moil in endless chain-gang round,  
And almost view the Past as madman's craze.

"Rare is the soul that sympathy betrays,  
As if they lose all claim to blame or praise,  
Or from their poverty contagion strays.  
Chafed raw by rough and seamy side of life,  
They stagger, wounded, crippled, by the strife,  
And often *lost* within the novel maze.

"Of all the blessings that the soul portrays  
When, as the heart-sick and world-wearied prays,  
We shall some time see heaven's glories blaze.  
Naught can surpass the certainty of this:  
That once within that sphere of perfect bliss,  
Our thoughts can never turn to 'better days'!"

When Charlotte paused, Elizabeth was crying, but I said: "We *will* have good times. You must not despair. If you do not marry, I



will. *I* do not mean to dress St. Catharine's hair in the next world, as the old saying has it that a maid must!" and I chanted the old prayer:

"A husband, Saint Catharine,  
A handsome one, Saint Catharine,  
A rich one, Saint Catharine,  
A nice one, Saint Catharine,  
And *soon*, Saint Catharine!"

"Position before money," said Elizabeth.

"Biddy would say love before money," said Charlotte.

"No," said I, "money, money, money! Think—of our heartaches and headaches, not only the picturesque of life, but the comforts denied us, all for lack of money! I would marry the *Devil* if he were rich!"

"Oh, Katharine!" they cried.

"I would! I would!" said I, striking my fist on the table.

"One might be tempted," said Elizabeth to Charlotte, who nodded.

"There could be inducements," said she.

The clock struck twelve; the house shook, and the windows jarred.

"Was that a shock of earthquake?" Charlotte asked.

"Only a blast of wind," said Elizabeth.



"No," I said, "there is some one knocking at the outside door."

"It is too late to open it," said Charlotte.

"Nonsense!" I cried. "Bright moonlight, and three of us! Let us all go. If not Fate for one of us, we can be the three Fates for him!"

They unwillingly followed me; but, at the last moment, I shrank, and it was Elizabeth who opened the door. A man who did not look quite strange to us, stood on the steps.

"Pardon me," he said, taking off his hat; "I followed you from Mrs. Wertley's, but did not start in time to overtake you. I heard you say you had a room to let. Can you excuse my coming at this untimely hour, and let me see it?"

We looked at each other. It would not do to lose a chance of a lodger. We let him in.

A true American, plain, thin, sharp-faced, alert, and confident. He wanted to avoid bad smells; he said he left his last quarters on that account. He took the room, paid a month's rent, and said he would come in the morning.

When he had gone, we took hands and danced round our table, spread with "Duke Humphrey's dinner."



"See what Midsummer Eve has brought us!" I cried.

At that moment the front door blew open, a wild gust of wind tore through the house, and put out the light; and, as we felt round in the dark, Charlotte said:

"There was something uncanny about that man. I am sorry he is coming."

"So am I," said Elizabeth; "but I thought I ought not to say so."

"I feel the same," I said; "but is it not as uncanny to be without money?"

And over a sputtering candle, burning blue, we all nodded at each other like so many doomed witches.

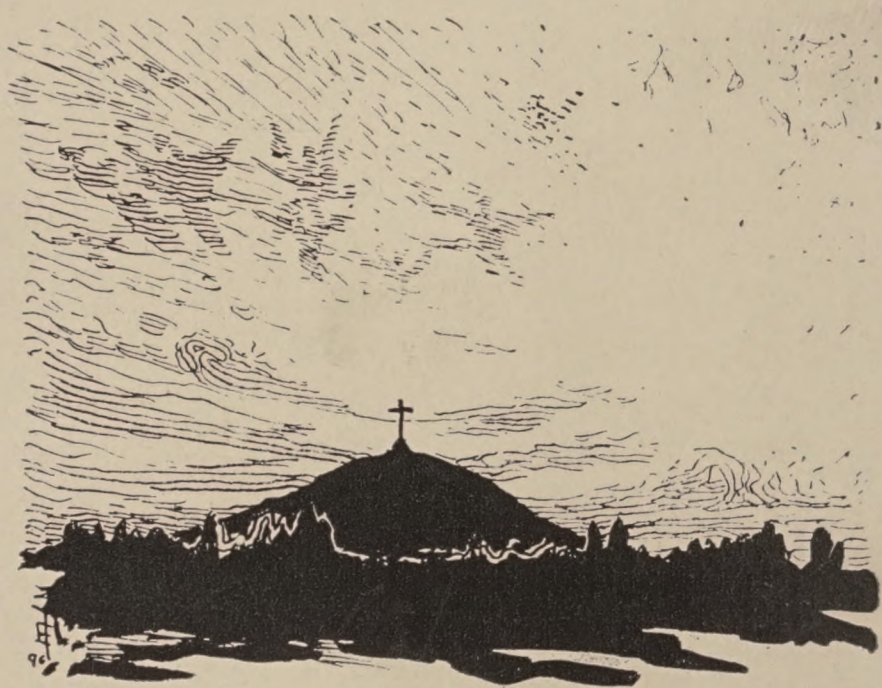
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#### CHARLOTTE'S DIARY.

*August 15.*—It does not seem now that less than two months ago we were in despair. Mr. Orne's taking the room, and the ease with which he helped us to work more fit for us, have been such relief. I have gone back to my pictures, and Elizabeth to her music. Katharine picked up in the street some money for which no owner could be found, that has paid half our debts.

Our handsome, dark, Spanish-looking lodger,











who tells me he is a poor, "devil-may-care" artist, went with me up on our flat roof to-night, to see a fine sunset. Strangely far-sighted, more like eagle than man, he saw things out of the range of most people's vision, and told me of ships far at sea. The great cross on Lone Mountain stood out black against scarlet clouds, while above stretched shadowy shapes as of angels.

"It reminds me," I said, "of an ecstasy of Saint Francis of Assisi, in a little chapel of Santa Croce in Milan—a cross standing up dark and strong in shade, a figure in friar's robes borne up in the gloom, as if floating on it, his arms lifted to arms of some vision he sees."

He gave one of his odd, scornful laughs. "What could the vision tell him?" he asked.

"The angels know all," I said.

"Not everything," he answered; "there are three things they do not know."

"What are they?"

"The day of the Second Advent, men's hearts, and the number of the elect. Then they have no tongues."

I thought I must try to reform this straying soul. "Don't you remember your Bible?" I asked.



"I know all about Job, Jethro, and Balaam," he answered; "they studied sorcery."

"This view changes like magic," I said; "all may be fog save where the sun rises a blood-red ball on its image in the bay, the two a huge pillar of fire, like sign and portent; or, sole rift at noon, a sheet of gold holding the shipping in black outlines; or, sky all blue, the bay looks a brook to be spanned by foot-plank, the city seems of toy-houses, the Golden Gate a mountain-hemmed lake; or the city shrunk into a patch of black mist, the bay is a great sheet of quicksilver; or, the city stretches everywhere, mountains and bay are withdrawn in vague, sad distance. It is like the views one takes in changing moods of the other world."

He seemed amused. "What do you know of the other world?" he asked.

"As much as any one. What do you think about it?" said I.

"Nothing," he replied. "Wait till you go there yourself. All that has been fancied about it does not near the truth. People are much surprised when they die."

And he laughed low and long, as if all to himself, at some secret thought.

"Angels came in dreams in Bible-times," I



said. "I once had a dream which was a great comfort to me. I thought I asked some one if we were immortal and should meet our friends. He answered, 'You ought to know by your own spirit.'"

"Has your spirit never deceived you?" asked our lodger; "does it not daily tell you wrong, for or against things you would do or think?"

I sighed to have to own how often my own thought had duped me. What strange power this man has—like a baleful star—to stir doubt in my heart! But my first distrust of him is gone; instead, he seems more like some one dear to me of old. By a fine sympathy he often seems to know before I speak what I am about to say, as if he read my mind. "If evil, there is also good——" I began.

He frowned. "There is too much light!" he cried, and we came indoors.

As I went down the stairs I looked back, saw his swarthy face in the fiery glow of the sunset, and saw for an instant a wonderful model for a picture of the Prince of Darkness.



## ELIZABETH'S DIARY.

*August 30.*—Our lodger, who proves a thorough musician—though he tells me he is heir to a proud foreign title—seems like an old friend, now I am used to his odd blonde beauty. He took me to-night to hear *Faust*. It was brought out with more care than often given, the voices sweet and well-trained, the acting good; but Mr. Orne was restless, and laughed at it all; and it had not so vivid a charm for me as before, though I shuddered at the weird warnings that in the overture, with mystic awe, hint all the tragic love-tale.

“Where,” I asked him, “has the music fled when the instrument is broken? It seems like a soul.”

“You do not *know*,” he answered, “of any hereafter for your own soul!”

“No,” said I; “but neither do we know all the hidden chances for bliss or woe in our lives; that we do not *know*, does not make them less there.”

“Swayed by this music,” he said, “you are not the same person who left home. Self thus made and unmade each moment, one is but a drift of atoms, unlikely to meet again!”

“Is it chance, or are we clock-work?” I said,



as the opera went on, and I was filled with a sense of the folly of striving against fate. "Or are we ruled by unearthly powers, as these instruments are played upon and forced to yield certain strains?"

"That is not for you to know," he said.

"Perhaps," said I, "vibrations from angels' choirs jar us like the atoms of Chladni, into our places."

"Then an infernal chorus," said he, "may cause the discord of awful crimes?"

"Yes," I said, "a spell from hell. What can the real Mephisto think of this stage copy?"

"It is as if a wild bloom tried to be a hot-house flower," he said. "How would you like a crude mockery of yourself?"

As we sat there, I could almost fancy in him a queer, flitting likeness to the Mephistopheles before us, like an image in a brook, shaken and changed by speaking to him.

While the music stirred me as wind blows a leaf, I saw so many unmoved faces in the crowd that I asked him: "Why does the effect of music vary on different persons?"

"Because," said he, "in music the unearthly touches the human. Some have no soul, no vital spark to move—like Tyndall's



sensitive flame, which shrinks at a hiss, thrills at a jar, and leaps at a waltz."

"Music seems to me," I said, "as if we heard a spirit trying to take bodily shape, but failing."

"Like that Mephisto there," he said; and after we reached home he still scoffed at that singer's make-up and acting.

"Why, even his laugh," said he, "had not the true ring. This is the way he should have looked and laughed"—and he donned my cloak, with its tasseled hood above his head in grotesque shape, and gave a wild laugh, which sent cold chills over us, and made Biddy, passing along the hall, stop and cross herself.

"You have frightened Biddy," I said.

"Oh, no," he said, "it is her own soul that scares her."

Then he brought his violin, and played Tartini's "Dream" for a good-night—"to make you dream," he told us.

"How strange it is," I said, "that dreams—else forgotten—sometimes come back to us at the sound of music."

"If they could only be brought again and finished," said Katharine, "you might read the letter which lately came to you, Charlotte."



“What was that?” he asked, with keen interest.

Charlotte read to him her verses :

“ UNKNOWN.

“ To me what could that note reveal  
Which glimmered through my dream?  
Large, white, with an unbroken seal,  
From whom 't was sent no gleam.  
Like planet's wheel our dreams conceal  
Strange hints of Life's hid scheme.

“ Was it from friend in distant star?  
Or one on earth, in sleep?  
Or that twin-soul whose path lies far  
From waking glances sweep?  
Or sent to mar all joys that are  
Where Dream-land shadows creep?

“ The music-score of demon-band?  
Or summons to witch ball?  
Or form of compact wily planned  
And signed with mystic scrawl,  
From fairy-land, or goblin damned,  
To hold my soul in thrall?

“ Did my good angel send me balm  
For heart too ill at ease?  
Perhaps a spray from heavenly palm,  
As signal of release —  
Or tale of charm in that fair calm,  
To cheer and give me peace?



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“What were its contents, grave or glad  
Reply to all I ask,  
When worn and weary, baffled, mad  
Despairing at Life’s task,  
I would have had the reason sad,  
Not wear its iron mask.

“Was it a message from the dead,  
Of hope, or warning sign?  
Accursèd be whatever led  
My soul from sleep divine!  
O’er note unread in that dream fled  
I often muse and pine!

“Do not open a letter which comes in your sleep,” said Mr. Orne, plainly vexed at such nonsense; “evil spirits are as likely to be near as good ones. The world of sleep is their carnival.”

Charlotte looked pale and startled. Katharine laughed.

“I do not need to dream,” said I. “I have other warnings.”

“What sort?” he asked, eagerly.

“Oh—a little bird tells me,” I said.

“Take care,” said he, as he left us; “it may be the bird of the Amazon, the ‘Lost Soul’!”



## BIDDY GOSSIPS.

“Sit down, Mrs. O’Shane; I can talk an’ iron too. Did ye mind the gintleman who wint out as ye kem in? He’s the strange lodger. Though he’s been here since June, an’ it’s now the middle of September, he is, an’ always will be, the strange lodger. The ladies upstairs are all greatly taken wid him, but what they can like I can’t, thin. Him—wid his club-foot, his hair in two curls like horns, his sly, cruel eyes, wid small whites to thim, his foxy, pinted ears, an’ claw-fingers!

“The first mornin’ he was here, I was on the front steps, comin’ from market, whin he wint out; an’ the sight of him made me cross mysilf. He gave me a scowl that was heart-scaldin’, and he seemed to jist melt into air like a flash, he was gone so quick—wid his flame-colored hair an’ whiskers, like the Judas-beard in the garden; his hollow back, too thin to cast a shadow; an’ his feet of unaven size. Sure, God’s writin’ is plain enough!

“It gives me a turn to hear his knock, for ne’ll not touch the bell. It is no work for thim to care for his room; he niver seems to have moved anythin’. They wondered why the piant died in the hangin’-basket in the hall.



But I saw him brush by it one day; it was that killed it.

“Thin he nearly crazes me, makin’ the wildest music on his fiddle. It’s always the sly lad that takes to playin’ on that, an’ there’s nothin’ plain an’ open about *him*. The three sisters are charmed wid him in-toirly. But the sight I got of him one night was enough for me—warnin’ for anybody. He had taken Miss Elizabeth to the theatre; an’ after they kem back, he caught her opera-cloak, as it was slippin’ from her shoulders to the floor, an’ threw it over himsilf wid the pinte hood on his head, stickin’ up like a horn. Ugh! what a divil he looked! I wondered what was in his nose thin. An’ he gave a screech of a laugh that curdled my blood an’ set my hair on ind. Sure, he’s one of those ye ought to hate at sight; an’ ye may know, if ye have much to do wid ’em, ye will come to be ready to travel many a hard mile to hear the dirt fall on their coffins.

“Even the cat there knows more than the three women; grave an’ still as she is, she knows what bad spirits have power at Midsummer Eve, an’ that was the night the quare man kem.

“I tell ye, I think he’s sort o’ bewitched



the sisters. They aven think they are wid him whin I know they are not. One will be tellin' me of goin' to a concert wid him. The same afternoon another says to me she was walkin' wid him, an' the other will speak of his bein' wid her here in the house! They are not much better off than before he kem, but they think they are. Lone, worried women take odd notions. They are jist out of their heads about him, but they'll come to grief, mind ye. Mind ye, he who eats wid the Divil has need of a long spoon! Perhaps they think it's in love they are, but it's not love. It's not the feelin' I had for Patrick, which made me not care whether he had cabin an' pig, or not. Don't mind me, I have to wipe away the tears when I think of him, though his grave is far away as Ireland an' twenty-five years can make it. But whin ye have known the rale thing, ye can tell what is sham. No, they are thinkin' of what they'll git, not of the man.

“Must ye go? Wait till I open the door for ye. Stay, do ye see that tall figure, a little lame, skulkin' up the street in the moonlight? Kape on the other side of the way, an' count yer beads as ye go, an' don't look at him, for he has the evil eye. Run now, for he



always moves so quick, I can think of nothin' but what I once heard the priest say in a sermon: 'And I beheld Satan like lightnin' fallin' from heaven.' "

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CHARLOTTE'S DIARY.

*September 30.*—To-day Mr. Orne took me to the park to see the Victoria Regia, like a bit of a sunrise cloud. He bought me a bouquet, but the heat of his hand withered it in a moment. He is so odd—darting here and there. I was speaking of the flower of the Holy Ghost, thinking he was by me, but suddenly found him distant the whole length of the greenhouse. When we came home, he drew the great lily with one or two dashes of his pencil; but though a true copy, I thought the outline bore, too, an odd likeness to an elfin face; but he talked me out of it.

"Though Saint Cyprian saw the Devil in a flower, you need not," he said.

"You work so quickly," I replied; "it makes me think of the Devil's crucifix, painted by two strokes of his brush in the convent of the Capuchin friars at Rome. He did it for a soul bound to him; and the soul was so struck with its heartrending truth, that he made the sign of the cross, and got free."



“It is well known,” he said, “the Devil would be an artist.”

“Is art an evil power?” I asked.

“Doctor Donne,” said he, “preached before Oliver Cromwell that the Muses were damned spirits of devils. No one can mark where the presence of evil comes and goes. It may be very near, and you not know it.”

I tried to work on his portrait, but in vain. He changes so much with his moods, and the fire of his eyes is not to be copied. The girls want to see it, but I keep it screened. To-day he was very restless; told me secrets of color thought to have been lost for ages; tossed over my portfolios of sketches and rhymes with mingled praise and blame. He found and read to me:

“UNFULFILLED.

“The night was dark and wet, in long gone age,  
When Genevieve to mass with maidens went;  
The gleaming torches, carried by a page  
Through gusty wind and rain, were quickly spent;  
She touched them, and again their ruddy glare  
Shone on the pious souls who wandered there.  
‘No fire of this world’—thus the legend ran;  
’T was her same force celestial that could snare  
The secret thought of man!



“ Upon the gilded tomb of Genevieve —

In church of Saint Etienne du Mont, the quaint,  
With airy stair from shadowed aisle to eave —

Behind a golden grating lies the saint.

Forever tapers shine. Who buys one tries  
To send some earnest prayer to Paradise.

Ah! long I watched its eager, changing flare —  
As hands raised, palm to palm, point toward the  
skies —

My burning, burning prayer!

“ Wind-shaken, like my thought that bold aspired,  
It paused, drooped fainting, rose again, implored,  
While I, like frantic moth, all my desire

Cast on the flame that yearningly adored.

Around my sacred hope this aureole  
Became a steady beacon for my soul,

And through long years of darkness and despair  
Its cheering rays athwart my care would roll,  
My glowing, glowing prayer!

“ At last, like smoke-wreath poisoning over flame,  
The shadow of my hope loomed just in view,  
But floated off, nor ever nearer came.

Was it within my sway for joy or rue?

Who shall define the bounds of will and fate,  
Man's choice, or hand of Providence debate?

To lose it was to see Hell's lurid flashes,  
And Heaven is — to find there, incarnate,

My prayer that burned to ashes!”

The strange smile that curled his lip made  
me in despair throw down my brush.



“There the Catholics are like the followers of Confucius,” said he, “who think what is burned rises to the next world. Do you recall the Devil of human size on the outer gallery of Notre Dame in Paris? Do you think he watches the smoke of the city to know what people want? Eastern tales are nearer right that keep him in ruins and desert places.”

“Like the minds he wrecks or lays waste.”

He flashed upon me a glance of keen question, then bent again over the sketch-books. He found a photograph of my favorite “Paolo and Francesca,” falling, falling, forever and ever, murky shadows reaching from below to engulf them, the light of lost Paradise streaming from above, a troop of filmy forms in the background watching.

“Is it not the worst of all for each that they must both go?” I asked.

“Would not their parting be worse?” said he. “No—*that* is not hell.”

With his swift pencil he sketched some woeful figures looking back—one who sees his bosom friend forget him; one who knows his foe pleased at his death; one who finds his secrets come to the gaze of the world; one who learns that the woman for love of whom he died loves and regrets him.



“Hell,” he said, “is to keep the same passions without the human frame in which to show them—to be in your old haunts and see things going against your wishes with no power to hinder; no dropping through bottomless pit, no raging flame could be worse. What would you choose for heaven?”

“To look back,” I said, “and see at least one of my pictures live on. I would give my soul for that.”

He clasped my hand as if to close a compact, and, as the other arm went round my waist, he said: “But your own image, mirrored in the soul that loves you, may be more lasting.”

I felt his fiery kiss upon my mouth. Bewildered, I could have believed that over his shoulder I saw the figures in his sketches begin to dance and jeer at me. I shrank back. At that moment, Katharine and Elizabeth burst in where we were, like jealous sisters in a fairy tale.

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#### KATHARINE'S DIARY.

*October 15.*—I went with Mr. Orne to a ball last night. The girls helped me dress, and each lent of her best, but I was so dazed with the strain of trying to look gay, while dulled by vain struggle to feel well, in our old



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worn things, that all the hours I was gone, though I seemed to see rich robes of Flanders lace and Genoa velvet he had sent for me to wear, yet I was mindful how Elizabeth had warned me of some carefully darned lace that would not bear a touch, and Charlotte had dyed an old sash-ribbon, and painted flowers over stains, and we had all sighed over the whole.

But here I was, as if in a leaf far back in the book of my life, in full dress once more, whirling with a rich and gay escort down a long hall of dancers, the band playing the "Lucifer" waltzes, my partner buoying me clear of the crowd. He seems to know every one; he was nodding right and left. I would cry: "Why, do you know him?" "Intimately," he would answer. And once, as he said so, the voice of a passing dancer reached our ears, and made us smile: "The Devil is nearer a man than his coat or his shirt."

He slipped on my finger a ring set with an opal of occult power and mystic fire, like the lurid light in his eyes; and when I said, "I like 'a pearl with a soul in it,'" he replied: "That is its very charm for me—the soul in it," looking at me as if he could will my very soul from me. I heard people groan that the



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supper was gone, but he brought me dainties in plenty, and unlike what others had found. I heard him jesting in many languages with this or that one, well known and liked by all. He told me he had just made a fortune in mining stocks. As I sipped and played with my spoon, caught the witch-gleam of my opal, felt pleased with the fine mesh of my laces, the shadow and glow of my velvet, I felt that to gain all such spendthrift wants of mine would make heaven of earth. Then the man went by who had quoted Luther. Was the Devil so near? Who was our strange lodger, who filled my mind with such wild thoughts, like an evil planet drawing forth all the bad in my nature? Then I forgot my doubts in the swift whirl of music and dance.

As we stood on our steps and he searched for his latch-key, I watched the fire of my opal, burning like a will-o'-the-wisp in the moon-lit dark.

"It has a weird life of its own!" I cried; and, fearing my sisters' eyes of wonder and envy, "Take it!" I said.

"Not without you," he answered, bending over me, and a sudden, brief kiss scorched my lips.

Then the girls, who had sat up for us, and



heard the carriage, had opened the door and swept us upstairs with them.

I could have thought them jealous by the way Charlotte cried: "You look changed in some way—like a shining spirit against a dark cloud!" And Elizabeth added: "It does not matter much about your dress, after all!"

I stood before our bureau-glass. It showed me the darned lace and dyed ribbon with which they had dressed me. Had I imagined my fine things? Perhaps I had but fancied the ball, the lights, and music, and my—lover! The ring was gone.

And then the next I knew, they had undressed me and put me in bed, and Elizabeth was cooling my head with damp cloths, while Charlotte was fanning me, and I heard them murmur together, as if far off. "What did she mutter about a ring set with a spark from hell?" Elizabeth asked. And Charlotte answered: "That she was sealed to Satan!"

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#### ELIZABETH'S DIARY.

*October 31.*—This afternoon, as I played Grégoire's fine "Etude du Diable," I was startled to my feet by finding Mr. Orne stood close behind me to hear.



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“Good, is n’t it?” I asked.

“Not the right thought,” said he; “listen.” And he drew from his violin strains of dread meaning.

“That is more unearthly,” I said; “a spirit might play so.”

“And a wicked one?” he answered. “The Mussulman legend runs, that the Devil is given leave to fill his spare time with music, song, love-poetry, and dancing.”

“How is it that you can surpass all others?” I asked.

“Because I have the will—the secret magic of all success.”

“Teach me,” I cried, “to win power, position!”

“Will you leave your sisters without farewell,” he asked, “and fly with me at twelve to-night, knowing no more of where you go than that you will have rank and sway beyond your wildest dreams?”

He drew me to him; his burning lips touched mine. Then my sisters rushed in, with that new, watchful way of theirs, and he went out.

This evening, as we sat together for the last time in our safe, warm, bright room, with a rising storm stirring all round the house, I



could hardly keep from telling the girls that I was going abroad, and all he had promised me. Indeed, I did hint about it, but they thought it only one of our old day-dreams, and Katharine, as if sure that hers was coming true, began to tell us how she should build her castle. Leaning proudly on the mantelpiece, she looked statuesque, as if the petrifying effect of wealth had begun.

"But how sad it is," she said, "to think that death can bear me from it all."

"My pictures," said Charlotte, "will live when I am gone."

"Position," said I, "may be prized even then, if we can look back."

"Yees can take nothin wid ye," said Biddy, who had come in unheard, "but love."

We all started, and then laughed in scorn.

"Sure, the priest was tellin' only last Sunday," said she, "how Saint Theresa could say nothing worse of the Divil than 'Poor wretch, he loves not.' Her notion of hell was that no love was there. But love is all we're sure of in heaven."

"Biddy, have you come to preach a sermon?" I asked.

"No, I beg yer pardon. 'Tis All Souls'



Eve, and I thought maybe yees would come to vespers to-night. The music 'll be fine."

For a moment we thought of going. I half rose; Katharine went a step or two toward the door; Charlotte left her seat. Was it the unfelt wind which blows us on the shoals of destiny which drove us back?

"Not now, Biddy," said I; "some other time. To-night Charlotte is, at last, going to let us see her portrait of our lodger. Don't you want to wait and see it?"

Charlotte placed it where we could view it in the long glass, which had lights around it, "like a shrine," Biddy said, as if she did not like it.

As Charlotte unveiled it, Katharine and I cried, in surprise: "This is not *his* likeness!"

And Biddy, laughing, said: "Not a bit, not a bit like him!"

"It is not only better-looking, but it is another man," said I; "there is no Spanish knight about *him*."

"No, indeed," said Katharine; "the true type of an American I call him."

"Why no," said I; "he is a pure German blonde."

Biddy heard, half-grinning, half-frowning. "Oh, yees are all bewitched, an' 't is Allhal-



lows Eve," she said; "come to the holy vespers, do."

But we laughed and sent her off; and when she had gone Mr. Orne suddenly stood in the door, as if he had sprung through the floor, and paused, looking at his picture.

"Come and tell us," cried Katharine, "how is it that Charlotte could paint you in this way?"

"No two persons see alike," he said. "One seems to different people to have as many characters, perhaps as many aspects. How few agree when speaking of any one!"

"But this," said Katharine, "has not your mouth; and you are neither light nor dark."

"But this," said I, "has not your chin, nor your fair hair."

"But this," said Charlotte, "has your dark curls. It is just like you, except the eyes, perhaps."

Then we all stared wildly at each other.

"But this," said Biddy, glancing in, with her bonnet on, "is All Souls' Eve, if yeas would only come."

"Where?" cried Mr. Orne, in a voice of scorn. But, seeing him, she fled like lightning, and the outer door echoed like thunder after her.



He soon followed. "But not to vespers," he said, laughing.

Katharine, Charlotte, and I wrangled over the picture till Charlotte screened and put it by, and sat at her desk to rhyme; while I, at the piano, with precious minor keys, unlocked the inner gates of the realm of musing, and Katharine sat with open book on lap, but looking in the fire. Hours went by with no word between us. We did not heed when Biddy came home, nor know when Mr. Orne passed through the door, but found him with us again.

"This is a fine gale," he said. "Bodies may be housed, but think of flitting souls going out into such a night."

"Is it the wind and storm," cried Charlotte, "which set me to writing this?" And, while the winds tore round the house in a witches' dance she read to us:

"AFTER DEATH.

"All through the unseen realm of air I float;  
The souls that, passing, mount to God, I note;  
Each flashing through the void like fiery mote  
By fierce wind blown.

"Death makes an anvil of our pigmy world,  
And drives these sparks—these spirits upward  
whirled—  
That glimmer on till all the dark is furled,  
Before the throne!











“ I would look back and linger, linger yet —  
What can I feel but passionate regret?  
When I remember thy dear eyelids wet,  
What shall atone?

“ But, borne by some resistless force, I go  
To learn what but immortal spirits know —  
Or faint and fading into darkness flow —  
Dread path unknown!

“ The earth becomes a distant waning star.  
What! is this all? A memory floating far;  
My conscience for the dreaded judgment bar;  
And this alone?”

In the shadowed chimney-corner Mr. Orne nearly went out of sight as she read. He seemed coming and going by the flickering fire as she paused or went on; and, at the end, I thought he had left the room; but a sudden glow of the fire showed that there he sat. Then he added some verses, while Katharine's book — “Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World” — slid to the floor, as she bent toward pictures in the fire; Charlotte leaned on her desk, with her face in her hands; and I, drifting off in a dream-skiff, trailed my hands through a rippling tide of music.

In a few minutes he read to us:

“ No dazzling ranks of angels' choirs appear,  
Nor bands of wailing spirits damned are here,  
A merely silent, lonely, misty sphere  
Forever shown,



“Where darts that restless flame, my naked soul.  
But sometimes yet at thy fond thought’s control  
I can return, thy faithful heart my goal,  
My Love, my Own!

“Know at thy tears I tremble, almost wane,  
Thy sighs revive my smouldering fire again,  
The best of life, our love, may yet remain,  
Eternal grown.

“But if thou canst forget, my light will pale,  
When no regret of thine seeks my lost trail,  
Then, only then, within dim depths I fail,  
Expire, alone!”

I roused from my rapt gaze at him to find Charlotte and Katharine looking at him as intently as if they, with their sudden jealousy, fancied the lines meant for them. The winds howled and shook the house, the rain beat against the pane, Mr. Orne, uneasy, too, walked up and down the long room, and his deep, rich voice, a cordial that warmed the ear, broke forth in “King Death is a rare old fellow!” He paused after one verse before Katharine. “Even Money is powerless before him,” said he.

He stopped after the next verse by Charlotte. “Yet Death may be foiled by Fame,” he said.

As he came near me at another verse, he



said: "On a level with all at the touch of 'his yellow hand.'"

We heard his voice die away in the distance in the ghostly old song about King Death. By the queer, subtile sway of one spirit over another, my sisters seemed to feel that parting was near. They could not have acted otherwise if either of them thought of going.

"Good-night, girls," said Charlotte, starting, but coming back to kiss us. "Perhaps I should say good-by. 'Who has seen to-morrow?'"

Soon after, Katharine rose. "Good-night," she said, kissing me, "and good-by—till we meet again."

I sit here alone, writing. I have listened to the vanishing sound of her footsteps; I am tempted to call them back. But it is on the stroke of twelve. The storm rages still more wildly; an awful night to be out. What a surprise is in store for my sisters! When I next see them, how strange will be our meeting!

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#### BIDDY GOSSIPS AGAIN.

"Sure, an' it's kind of ye, Mrs. O'Shane, to come in this pourin' rain to-night. Give me the umbrill, an' sit ye down by the fire. Yes,



it has stormed night an' day for a week—ever since Allhallows Eve, heaven save us!

“Tell ye all about it? Oh, they got worse an' worse—all three wild in love wid him, an' that jealous they did n't want one of them to be alone wid him. Now, he was all wrapped up in Miss Elizabeth, playing duets wid his witch of a fiddle, showin' her how to write music, an' talkin' of his high rank at home; then jist the same wid Miss Charlotte, teachin' her how to mix colors, an' touchin' up her pictures, an' tellin' her she was a wonder, an' folks wouldn't forget *her*, an' writin' verses wid her; an' jist as deep wid Miss Katharine, plannin' how she was to make her fortune in no time, an' always showin' off in some way how rich *he* was.

“How did I know his ways so well? Did n't I use to be goin' through the hall quite careless, an' hear it all? Ye may learn a good dale that way, by niver hurryin' yourself. Many's the time he nearly caught me, but I got into the dark corner, wid my apron over my head, quakin' as he went by. But at last he got a dog—an awful big, black crater, wid eyes like coals, an' I had to kape down here.

“I *did* talk to thim. I could n't make thim see him as I did, try as much as I would. Ye



might as well warn water not to run down hill. An' he windin' round thim like a snake, I used to think. May the holy saints kape us! Is that only the shutters knockin'? Let us say a prayer or two. It makes me shake to think of him now.

“About the mornin' after All Souls' Eve, is it? Listen to this, thin: His sketches an' verses they thought so much of had turned to black paper! They each had his picture, they called it, but neither one looked like him, an' that mornin' they had sunk to a little heap of ashes under where they had hung! An' Miss Elizabeth's portrait of him was never as she thought she left it, nor as her sisters thought it looked, but it was like him as I saw him, only it had no eyes!

“If ye'll believe it each one showed me that night a fine necklace the strange man had given her, a secret from the others. It was good as a play to see them comin', one after the other, on the same errand. Poor dears! Bless us and save us!—don't move your chair with such a sudden noise, it makes me jump; an' *don't* kape lookin' behind ye! Miss Charlotte's was coral, all carved into little imps; Miss Elizabeth's was like great coals of fire—carbuncles, she said 'twas; an' Miss Kath-



arine's was like little red sparks—rubies, she called them, an' said it must have cost a great deal of money. But next mornin' their bureau drawers, where they kept their fine things, held no necklaces—nothin' but a heap of dead leaves, an' dust, an' pebbles!

“No, it was only a red line round the throat each wore for a chain at daylight. Dead, then? Dead as Pharaoh!

“Yes, he was gone, an' they will not find him, either; though the police an' reporters call me a crazy old woman to doubt it, but I'm sure they'll have their trouble for their pains. Where is he? The Divil knows!”



A STRAY REVELER.







## A STRAY REVELER.

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*The Picture Which Was a Prophecy.*

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"Who hath known the ways and the wrath,  
The sleepless spirit, the root  
And blossom of evil will?"

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"Which is the room, and which is the picture?" I asked my friend Aura, when she received me after my long absence abroad, during which I heard she had fallen heir to a fortune, but found her looking pinched and wan.

The picture filled nearly one side of the room, which was arranged as an exact copy of it, even having a lattice-window opening lengthwise, put in to match the painted one. Carpet, Navajo rugs, chairs, tables, draperies were alike. A strip of carpet hid the lower part of the frame, so that one might fancy he saw double parlors instead of one room and a painting. The screen in the room stood at just such an angle as just such a screen stood



in the painted scene. Tall Japanese vases, low bookcase, hanging shelves filled with rare, odd trifles, were all thus doubled.

“Yes,” she said, seeing me glance to and fro, “I felt impelled to copy everything painted there, and to banish all my room held before. That knotted rope under glass on the mantel? Well, no; that was neither in the picture nor here, till now; the fact is, I hold the property Penniel left me only by keeping that there. Two of his friends, Dacre and Chartram, received bequests on condition of calling here unexpectedly at irregular intervals to see that I let it remain always in my sight.”

“I don’t like it there.”

“Nor I; but there is nothing puzzling about it as about the picture, finished just before he—he died. *That* is a legacy I have often pondered over. Why did he call it prophetic? I always wonder where the window in it looks, and that inner door ajar, showing a banquet-scene. Is it a Christmas revel?”

“One of the female figures resembles you—why, it is meant for you!”

“Don’t, don’t say so! It makes me uneasy, and angry, too; for I will *not* believe in the ‘mystic’ nonsense of his scribbling, painting, and acting tribe.”



“Yet you always let them hang round you.”

“Because they are amusing, often handsome, and sometimes have money. But few come now, except Chartram and Dacre, in their uncertain visits. I am no longer gay enough company.”

“Pshaw! as if the influence of one who is dead could thus last!”

“If not, how could there be so many true tales of curses which have followed individuals or families through generation after generation. I never used to believe any such thing. I am forced to keep the picture under the terms of Penniel’s will, and I cannot help studying it.”

“Did Penniel paint it?”

“Yes. He put me in that festive scene because I am yet alive. He once spoke of ghosts as stray revelers after life’s banquet. The vacant seat beside me was to signify his absence. ‘Not eternal,’ he wrote; ‘I shall come back when you least expect it.’”

“You make me shiver. Let us talk of other things. What a pretty inlaid table—wild-fowl flying over a marsh—isn’t it? Ah! it is just like that one in the picture,



even to a manuscript lying upon it spread open under a horseshoe paper-weight."

"You see," said Aura, "one drifts inevitably to that painting. What the manuscript there represents I have often asked myself. The one beside you, Dacre wrote. Read it."

It was:

"A FLIGHT OF FANCY.

"In single file wild-ducks drift by.  
Dyed red by western glow.  
Belated swallows lonely fly,  
And strange birds trooping go.

"Though flown from forest-pine remote,  
Or from near orchard-pear,  
Along the water-depths they float,  
As on the heights of air.

"The lake, with mirror-surface spread,  
Bronzed by the day's bright close,  
To each wayfarer overhead,  
A shadowy double shows.

"Ah! thus reflected in my soul  
What flitting thoughts will stray  
From hidden source — ancestors' dole,  
Or sunshine of my day.

"Fantastic shapes that, circling, throng,  
Some charming, some unblest;  
I snare one in this fragile song,  
I cannot count the rest."



I made another effort to divert her mind. "What is behind your lovely screen?" I asked.

"Nothing. What is behind that one?" she asked, pointing to the pictured one. "That question haunts me like the indefinite meaning of some passage in Browning or Rossetti."

"What have you learned by your study of it?"

"What do you discover by examining that screen near you?"

"Masses of interwoven flowers with trailing vines and lights and shadows athwart the whole. Who painted it?"

"Chartram; and while he was doing it he and I suddenly detected amid those apparently random dashes of color eleven letters. Look again—begin at the lower left-hand corner and cross diagonally—here are lilies of the valley, then eschscholtzias, a branch of *xanthoxylum fraxineum*, tuberoses, azalias, lobelia, iris-lilies, oleander blossoms, Neapolitan violets, ixia-lilies, and stephanotis flowers."

"Well?"

"Don't you see? Two words not merely spelled by the first letter of the plants' names, as the old-fashioned 'regard' rings were set with ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby, and diamond, but by looking carefully you can



discern, in the seemingly careless spray or cluster, the letter in indistinct and fanciful form."

As she spoke and I gazed at the screen, I was surprised to distinguish so plainly now the words, *Lex talionis!* so skillfully placed as to elude a careless glance. "The law of revenge!" I cried. "Was this more of your old coquetries?"

"No; I did not tire of Penniel as usual. He had one charm all my other lovers had lacked: a stronger will than mine."

I looked at her inquiringly.

"When you went away you remember I was starving—genteelly starving. I met Penniel; he was engaged to an heiress. I reasoned with myself that she did not need his money as I did. I used every art to win him from her."

"Oh, Aura!"

"I did, I did! I may own it now, since both are dead."

"Both?"

"Yes; he broke the engagement on account of something I told him about her. She died soon after, some say broken-hearted; but, of course, we know that is a mere phrase. I presume she got a cold, or something."











“And your refusal of him killed him?”

“No; I accepted him. All went well until one night we went on horseback with a party of friends, on a moonlight trip to the Cliff House. While there, he overheard me own my worship for money. ‘*Not* marry for it?’ I said. ‘It is a woman’s duty.’ And he met there that night some old friend who completely disproved all I had told him about Helen Rothsay, the girl who died. Oh, how angry he was!—his eyes were lurid, he never spoke to me again. Next day he sent back to me these verses he had found that Dacre had written for me to give him as mine, though you know there is nothing nonsensical about me.”

She gave me to read a

“VILLANELLE.

“What clouds of laughing little Loves arise—  
On buoyant wing are all about me blown!  
I dream within the night of his dark eyes.

“How blest to be, though but in flower guise,  
Worn on his heart until my life were flown!  
What clouds of laughing little Loves arise!

“Forgotten is the sun, to-day’s blue skies,  
I know nor time nor space nor any zone;  
I dream within the night of his dark eyes—



"By fancied blisses borne to Paradise,  
Like some translated saint that Art has shown.  
What clouds of laughing little Loves arise!

"Such lotos-eating lures until one dies,  
No poppy-petals such nepenthe own;  
I dream within the night of his dark eyes.

"For him my passion waxes crescent-wise;  
Will wind and tide of Fate its sway disown?  
What clouds of laughing little Loves arise!  
I dream within the night of his dark eyes."

"He also sent me a letter telling me of these discoveries and taking leave. 'I shall avenge Helen's wrongs,' he wrote, 'I shall avenge my own wrongs, but in my own time and in my own way. You shall suffer for what you have done, if I have to come back from the next world to make you. Poor or rich, old or young, sad or gay, remember that *I have not forgotten.*'"

"He died soon after?"

"Yes; in a year and a day from the time we first met, which was Christmas Eve."

Company came, and I could hear no more.

Two weeks later, on Christmas Eve, Aura sent for me. I found her in the same room, looking thinner and more depressed, and studying the painting.

"Don't!" I said; "you will dream of it."



"I did. I have been in the picture, gathered a leaf from that graceful clump of ferns growing in the odd jar, sat in that antique chair, and looked from that open window."

I could not understand my hitherto matter-of-fact friend. "What did you see?" I asked.

"The same grand sunrise that thrilled us, Penniel, Dacre, Chartram, and I, as we returned from a New Year's Eve ball. A sunrise Penniel wrote about."

She showed me these lines:

"A NEW-YEAR'S DAWN.

"Through fog that veils both sky and bay there gleam  
The sun and wraith, red glowing;  
So interblended that one flame they seem  
As if dread portent showing.

"Where will it lead us through the year untried,  
Through what vast desert places,  
Vague tracts of time whose misty margins glide  
Within eternal spaces?

"I, weary pilgrim in Life's caravan,  
That pillared fire must follow  
Past pyramid and sphinx of Doubt and Ban,  
Mirage of Hope, how hollow!

"Palm-shaded wells of joy, too far apart,  
Long leagues through changeful weather,  
Unless that foe in ambush, my own heart,  
Leaps, and we fall together!"



“What else happened?” I asked.

“Nothing. I was dimly conscious of coming from that room into this. I want to stay here. Tell me about your travels, and divert me.”

I talked to her a long while; then she brewed rich chocolate, which we sipped as we sat silently listening to the sounds of mirth from a party given by boarders in the opposite room, listening to the fog-horn and the wind, till drowsiness stole over us insensibly as the fog crept round the house, as if forming an impalpable barrier around a region enchanted.

Suddenly Aura started out of her doze with a piercing cry, and sat trembling from head to foot. “I have been there again,” she said.

“You have not left your chair.” I murmured, half-awake; “you dropped asleep.”

“Perhaps you think so; but I have been in the picture.” She shuddered as she turned her head to look at it. “There were *two* vacant places at the table. I no longer sat there, but wandered about the outer room while the guests at supper were watching and whispering and pointing, and a murmur of ‘*Lex talionis!*’ ran from mouth to mouth. I felt that some horror waited for me and drew me to that screen, but I tried not to go. I went to the window, but the view was changed



to the blackness of midnight. I looked in the mirror, yet saw nothing reflected but the room behind me. I was not to be seen. I noticed the perfume of the flowers in the bouquet on the table. I saw this room, with our figures sitting before the fire, with our chocolate-tray between us, as a picture on the wall of that room. I took the manuscript from the table, and found it to be verses, as we thought. I can repeat them :

## BALLADE OF THE SEA OF SLEEP.

When from far headland of the Night I slip,  
What potent force within the rising tide  
Bears me resistless as the billows dip,  
To meet their shifting wonders, eager-eyed,  
Or float, half-conscious what stars watch me glide,  
To fear when nightmare monster's weight o'erpowers,  
Or laugh with nymphs and mermen in their bowers —  
Through blinding tempest toss on breakers steep,  
Or fall for countless fathoms past what lowers  
Below the dream waves of the sea of Sleep!

I trace, with sails all set, the unbuilt ship,  
And sunken treasure, ere the waves subside;  
Find here the wrecked craft making phantom trip;  
Define the misty bounds: upon this side,  
The mighty mountains of the Dark abide;  
On that, the realms of Light expand like flowers;  
There, 'tis the rocky coast of Death that towers;  
Here, on the shoals, Life must its lighthouse keep.  
Who is it that vague terror thus empowers  
Below the dream-waves of the sea of Sleep?



On shore all day I find slight fellowship,  
But in those surges fain would plunge and hide;  
Those depths hold joys that none above outstrip.  
Perchance—I cannot choose what shall betide—  
Friend flown afar I clasp, dread foe deride,  
Forget that sorrow all my heart devours,  
Avenge the wrongs that Fate upon me showers.  
Not my control can lift the tide at neap,  
Nor quell its rise. Who thus my will deflours  
Below the dream-waves of the sea of Sleep?

## ENVOY.

Archangels, princes, thrones, dominions, powers!  
Which of ye dwarf the centuries to hours,  
Or swell the moments into eons' sweep?  
Is it the Prince of Darkness, ther., who cowers  
Below the dream-waves of the sea of Sleep?

I was full of indecision and fear about  
looking behind the screen, but, at last, I did  
look—”

Her voice failed. I gave her some wine

“What did you think you saw?”

“Think! I *saw* it.”

“What?”

“Don’t ask me!” she cried, shuddering.  
“I cannot describe it. Can you imagine the  
aspect of a corpse, long dead, mouldering,  
luminous, all blue light, and threads and tatters  
of its burial robe? O God, save us!” Her  
glance rested on the mantel. “I will not keep



that rope. I will *not!* I *will* not! Curses on him and his memory!”

She snatched down the glass case, broke it, and flung the rope in the grate. We watched it as the fire consumed it and for a few moments held its charred outlines as it had fallen in a distinct semblance of a closed hand with index-finger pointing toward the screen! Our eyes met above it. “Do poets and artists possess an extra sense?” she muttered, grasping my arm in awe.

“But the property!” I stammered in sudden alarm. “What will you do without that?”

“No one need know at present of this conflagration. I will lock up and go abroad. I will start to-morrow!”

Just then we heard the voices of Dacre and Chartram in the hall. We stared at each other in dismay. “They must not come here!” she cried, and hurrying toward the next room disappeared behind the screen. The next instant a blood-curdling shriek rang through the room, rooting me to the spot where I stood. Before I knew anything more, Dacre and Chartram were standing by me, asking what was the matter. I could not speak. Weighed down by a sense of dread, I could only point to the screen. As they turned it



aside, throwing another part of the room into shadow, the picture vanished in gloom, but the room took a more picturesque aspect. The door ajar showed, across the narrow hall, the open door where the merry-makers paused, leaning forward with startled faces and anxious gestures. Aura was lying full length on the carpet, dead! Her face was full of terror. Was it only a shadow, that livid line around her neck as if she had been strangled? As we turned away in horror, Dacre uttered a cry of surprise, and touching Chartram, pointed to the vacant space on the mantel.

“The rope?” they cried with one voice, like the chorus to a tragic opera.

“She had just burned it,” I stammered.

They looked at each other. “Did she furnish Penniel with the means to destroy her?” Dacre asked Chartram.

“Tell me,” I begged, “what is the mystery of that rope?”

There was a moment's delay. Then Chartram gave the startling reply: “It was the one with which Penniel hung himself.”



THE NIGHT BEFORE THE  
WEDDING.







## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING

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*Etching.*

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"Any one may dream." — *Polish Jew.*

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*Mother.* Eh! What? John, I'm glad you woke me.

Crying, was I?

Oh! it seemed as if I had married Seth instead of you. Yet it was bitter to lose the years that you and I have been dear to each other. May our girl be half as happy!

*Father.* There, there, Ann! All have hard trials in sleep as well as out. Strange truths show there, and masks fall. I was dreaming, too. (Sighs.) I wonder what became of my old sweetheart Jane!

*Bride.* His friend! Urge not. *Your* eyes are kind. *You* would be gentle, tender. I should adore you! I only dreamed that I was bound. I dare go to the world's end, the farthest star, with *you*—yet I tremble——



*Best Man.* My shy darling! *He* is too fierce, but *I*—why, the whole grand universe shaped toward *our* blissful meeting! Fear not, you and Love and I part never, but, still pilgrims three, shall pass to Paradise.

*Bridesmaid.* I wept for this! To be, if once only, folded to your heart, your fond lips on mine! My soul's great deep reflects alone your face! I could kill myself to keep it there—not know you *hers*! *She* care as you deserve? I worship you! *Her* right is not like *mine*.

*Bridegroom.* You draw me as by a spell. Before your eyes' fire the world I knew melts into nothingness! Life was a milk-and-porridge nursery rhyme! Now first grown to my full stature, with the strength, the will of a god, I defy earth, hell, and heaven! Come!

*Servant.* (To another as they wake with a start.) Gone to be married, but changed about! I saw them. I was *not* asleep! I heard them; I got up and looked through the crack of the door. Downstairs went one couple at a time. Queer-looking—like spirits!

*Watch-dog.* They came out. Where did they go? Dust rises in the road as from carriages rolling off opposite ways. (Roused.) Two o'clock and a full moon. (Suddenly bay-



ing.) Powers of Air! whom dull man doubts.  
*I* see you! *I* know your work—tangling  
sleepers' thoughts with luring, mocking, heart-  
rending hints of What Might Be!







THE DRAMATIC IN MY DESTINY.







## THE DRAMATIC IN MY DESTINY.

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"Who shall say, 'I stand!' nor fall?  
Destiny is over all."

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### PROLOGUE.

"Alcohol is for the brutish body, opium for the divine spirit," said Tong-ko-lin-sing, as he lighted the lamp. "The bliss from wine grows and wanes as the body has its time of growth and loss, but that from opium stays at one height, as the soul knows no youth nor age." He brought the jar of black paste, rounded up by layer on layer of poppy petals. "Opium soothes, collects, is the friend alike of rich or poor. It has power to prove to the sinner that his soul is pure, and make the unhappy forget; it reverses all unpleasant things, like the phonograph playing a piece of music backward." He handed me the pipe—flute-like, fit instrument for the divine music of Dreamland, though clumsy bamboo—the earthen bowl with the rich coloring of much smoking, like a Chinaman himself. "Dead faces look on us, and



dead voices call, for the soul then gains its full stature, can mix with the immortals, and does; when alone and in silence, it can know that Time and Space have no bounds." He took a wire, which he dipped in the jar and held in the flame. "Strangest of all is the power of opium to form as well as repeat, even from odds and ends in our minds. There are herbs which inspire, those which destroy, and those which heal. The Siberian fungus benumbs the body, and not the mind; the Himalayan and the New Granadan thorn-apple brings spectral illusions; why should there not be those which may cast prophetic spells?" The few drops of the paste clinging to the wire bubbled and burned. He smeared it on the rim of the pipe-bowl. "Opium has the power of a god; it can efface or renew the Past, and ignore or foretell the Future."

I drew three or four whiffs of whitish smoke; the bowl was empty. Again he went through the long course of filling. "Though it bring dream within dream, like our Chinese puzzles—mark their meaning, for our Chinese saying is, 'The world's nonsense is the sense of God!'"

I heard. I knew him for my queer teacher of Chinese, who knew French, English, and



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Sanscrit as well, whom I was wont to muse over here in "Chinatown," as over a relic, until oppressed with thought of the age of his country, until San Francisco seemed a town built of a child's toy-houses, and ours but a gadfly race. I knew the room, with its odd urns and vases, fans and banners, some of the last with stain which shows the baptism of human blood, given to make them lucky in war; the china and bronze gods, ugly and impossible as nightmare visions; the table, with lamp and pot of tar-like paste, my Chinese grammar, and paper and ink; the other table, with its jar of sweetmeats, covered with classical quotations, basket of queer soft-shelled nuts, and bottle of Sam-Shoo rice-brandy; the much-prized gift, a Lianchau coffin, standing up in the corner; the mantelpiece, with Tongko-lin-sing's worn lot of books, where the great poet, Lintsehen, leaned on Shakspeare, Sakuntala stood beside *Paul and Virginia*, *Robinson Crusoe* nudged Confucius and Hiouentsang, and *Cinderella* sat on Laotse; and hanging above them a great dragon-kite which would need a man to control it. I knew the Chinese lily, standing in the pebbles at the bottom of a bowl of clear water on the window-sill, by a globe of gold-fish; and, beyond,



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the Oriental street (for it was in the region bounded by Kearny, Stockton, Sacramento, and Pacific streets, where fifty thousand aliens make an alien city, a city as Chinese as Peking, except for buildings and landscape, and not unlike the narrow, dirty, thronged streets, with dingy brick piles, of Shanghai); the *café* across the way, with green lattice-work, and gilding, and gay colors in its gallery; the lottery-man next door, setting in order his little black book covered with great spots like blood; the rattle of dice coming from the half-open basement next to us; the cries of stray vendors of sweetmeats; no sound of any language but the Chinese passionless drone, too cramped for all the changes of life's emotions, with its accent unswerving as Fate; the only women among the passers-by shuffling along with stiff outworks of shining hair, bright with tinsel and paper flowers, and wide sleeves waving like bat-wings, broad fans, spread umbrellas, and red silk handkerchiefs—sometimes in one of these a baby slung over its mother's back, perhaps one less gayly dressed tottered on goat-feet between two girls who held her up; little children like gaudy butterflies in green and gold, purple and scarlet, crimson and white,—boys in gilt-fringed caps, girls with



hair gummed into spread sails, and decked like their elders; an endless line of dark, mysterious forms, with muffling blouse and flaunting queue, the rank, poisonous undergrowth in our forest of men. I was idly aware of all this. I knew that I, Yorke Rhys, quite care-free and happy, had nothing to dread. I calmly dropped down the tide of sleep—but what was this vivid and awful dream—all in brighter hues and deeper shadows, and more sharply real than Dreamland seems, without the magic touches of opium? As if looking in a mirror, like the Lady of Shalott, I saw all past scenes at once as a great whole. Against the mystic gloom of opium everything stood out as the night shows the stars; the soul had a mood that could focus All since the making of the world, and only then knew how far off, fading, stretch the bounds of Time, the untold reach of the Universe, which we wrongly think we daily see and know. I saw into it all as a leader reads an opera-score. I was unused to dreaming, being seldom alone and without time for long walks, and I wondered when my own mind mocked me with odd bits it held, jumbled and awry, like my own likeness in rippling water, mostly what I had once thought of, but not as I thought it. Past



events started forth, not as what I had gone through with, but as a part of my inner sense, with old fancies about passing trifles; as when one, though rapt in some strong feeling, may yet mark the number of notes in a bird's song, or of boughs to a tree, or of petals to a flower, as if the mind must be double, we think; but in my dream I learned that it is yet more complex. In the vast poppy fields of Bengal, likened to green lakes where lilies bloom, near the holy city of Benares, which dates itself back to creation, I idly plucked a white blossom on a lonely stalk, and flung it down, when it at once changed to a shapeless form, which chased me. Then it seemed it had been my curse through far-off ages, the frost that chilled me when I was a flower, the white cat that killed me when I was a bird, the white shark that caught me when I was a fish—in all places a white cloud between me and my sunshine. My horse, in gold armor, thickly gemmed, bore me from the field where a silk tent held my love, with others of King Arthur's court, to a gloomy-raftered cobwebbed hall, where shield and battle-axe were given me, and soon I wept over the shattered helm of one whom I had loved—yet killed. Where silver cressets shone behind diamond panes,



and dragon-banners flew from gilded turrets of my castle, I waited at a postern in the wall for a note from my lady-fair, but the pale spectre of a scorned lover told me she was dead. Through the lapse of ages, over strange lands, in old and new-world town or wild, I often lost my way, but never the sense of an unseen foe. Now, at a masked ball in some old palace, where I was dogged by a white domino with whom I must fight a duel; then, in the red glare of the southern moon in the Arizona desert, through stillness overwhelming as noise, I fled from a figure hid in a Moqui blanket. By huge fires, I, too, waited the coming of Montezuma. I was Montezuma, held down by weight of the mountain which bears his profile at Maricopa Wells. My great white shadow flitted after me across the red and yellow of Colorado scenery. In the awful depths of Gypsum Cañon, I gazed in despair up at the round, well-like heights for chance to flee from It. At the Royal Gorge, peering from the cliff straight down for over two thousand feet, I gladly saw It at the base. Eased, I stood on a mountain-top, where, as I turned, I saw the four seasons—most wonderful view that could be brought by a wizard of old to a king's windows; but here I suddenly



found a white mist that turned as I did, and strove to shape itself to my form. Crossing the plains of Nevada, It was the white dust which choked and blinded me from sight of the pink and purple mist-veiled peaks. In a Mexican mine, at a shrine to the Virgin, cut in the rock where her lamp glowed through lasting night, It was the large white bead of my rosary of Job's Tears, which took my thoughts from prayer and broke my vows. Again, It was the mirage of Arizona midnights or noons, and I was one of the coyotes who leave their holes to howl. It was a spectre that strove to burden me with the secret of the pre-historic ruins of the Casa Grande. It brooded as a mist over the Colorado River while I hid in its depths—a corpse—as if it might be my ghost. Here I could have been safe, since that stream does not give up its dead, but as a small bird I was forced to cross a wide sea, chased through days and nights by a great white gull. Lost in the jungle of a Chinese forest, I suddenly came to a clearing where beetle and glow-worm were staking out a grave for some one near and dear to me, whose death I could not hinder. I watched until they began to mark a second grave—oh, for whom? But I was torn from this sight, and thrust in the heart of a



Chinese city. I wound through its crooked streets to a dark flight of steps, which came to an end; no rail, no step, darkness before I could get quite down; and I was again creeping from the top of a like staircase. Over and over I tried to go down these vanishing stairs. At last, I was faced suddenly, as if he sprang through a trap-door, by a huge white form that tried to tell me something, some strange fact linked with my fate, which would explain a secret that had long chafed me. But what? I shook with fear—Tong-ko-lin-sing spoke to me. I woke. My first glance fell on the pure, sweet-scented lily, calm and fair, in its clear, glass-bowl, and the relief was so great that tears sprang to my eyes.

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ACT I.

“ ‘Was it not Fate, whose name is also Sorrow?’ ” said Elinor.

We were looking at Randolph Rogers’s “Lost Pleiad,” in the inner room of Morris & Schwab’s picture-store.

“No,” said I, kindling at a glance from her fine eyes; “Fate is well named when in one’s favor, but cannot be truly against one. I could master it; so could others. Man rules



his own life—it need not depend on others—he gains what he strives for, and need never yield to evil forces.”

“Then you have no pity for the man who killed another here yesterday?”

“None. That is the worst of crimes. I respect the Brahmins, who hold life sacred even in an insect. No. Heaven may keep me from other sin—I will hold myself from murder.”

“Your friend, Noel Brande, does not think as you do.”

“No; but he gains his wishes because he is brave enough to try and fight what he calls doom.”

“That is not the only point on which you differ.”

“No; but we are too fond of each other to quarrel.”

“Even Fate could not break your friendship?”

“Never. I defy it.”

“It is as good as a fortune to be sure of one’s self,” she said, looking at me for an instant with such approval that I was bewitched enough to have spoken my love if others had not come in, and we soon strolled home.

Her shy, brief glances stirred my brain like



wine. Was it true that the woman who could look long in a man's eyes could not love him? I sighed with joy. I was in the gay mood which the Scotch think comes just before ill luck. It had been a very happy day. I had taken her to drive in the Park in the morning; I had found her in the picture-store in the afternoon. As we went up our boarding-house steps, I felt that the world was made for me. As she passed through the storm-door before me, I stayed for mere lightness of heart to drop a gold piece in the apron of Nora, the neat Irish nurse-girl, sitting outside with Elinor's little cousins. Elinor had glided so far alone that Si-ki, coming toward her with a card that had been left for her, did not see me. I watched him, thinking of what Nora had told of his skill in making melon-seed fowls, and carving flowers from vegetables, and of her dislike for his hue—"like an old, green copper," she said. He did have an odd sort of tea-color to his skin, not unlike that of morphine-lovers, but I thought he looked no worse than Nora, with her face like a globe-fish. Elinor, with hand on the newel, paused to look at the card. Amazed and angry, I saw Si-ki dare to lay his hand on hers, saying:

"Nicey! Nicey!"



Elinor's hand—that I had not yet held but as any one might, in a dance, or to help her from a carriage! The sight filled me with such rage, that, just as I would have brushed a gnat out of the world, I sprang on Si-ki and began beating him. I was in such fury that I scarcely knew when Elinor and Nora fled, or that the French lady hung over the railing upstairs, in her white frilled wrapper, with but one of her diamond sparks in her ears, and her hair half dressed, crying to heaven; that the Spanish lady stood in the parlor-door, clapping her hands; that the German professor opening his door, the Italian merchant running down-stairs, the English banker, the American broker, and my friend Brande, coming in from the street, all tried to stop me.

“Keep back! It is a matter between us two!” I answered them all. “Between us two!” timing my blows to my words. I thrashed him till my cane snapped in two. “Between us two!” I turned him out. “Between us two!” I cried, and flung him down the steps. “Between us two!” I muttered to myself as I went up-stairs to my room, with a passing glimpse of Elinor, disturbed and blushing, in the doorway of her aunt's room. She did not come to dinner. The foreign boarders



were shocked or excited; the others amused or unmoved; the landlady was vexed. I was filled with shame to have spent so much force and feeling on such a wretch, and to have distressed Elinor by setting all these tongues in motion about her; to think that I, Yorke Rhys, high-born and high-bred, should have deigned to so beat a creature of no more worth in the world than a worm. But, as I told Brande that night in my room, I had a strange dislike for Si-ki.

"He was too cat-like," I said, "with his grave air, his slyness and soft tread, his self-contained cunning."

"Yes," said Brande; "our rough classes are like the larger kind of beast; those of the Chinese are like rats and gophers—the timid, wiry, alert creatures who pose on their hind-legs in nursery-tale pictures."

"They look like a child's drawing on a slate," I said; "outlines of a man, in square-cut robes."

"But that Chinese teacher of yours is worse," said he; "dark as if the gloom of ages had taken man's shape, with as still motion, locked behind his reserve, as if cased in mail. It is like dealing with ghost or sphinx."



“He shows the effect of inherited civilization,” said I; “dignified, priestly, close-mouthed as if his millions of ancestors in him frowned at me as one of a short-lived race—a sort of Mormon-fly with its life of one night.”

“He and the Chinese grammar both would be too much for me to meet,” said Brande.

“But they have each their charm,” I said. “The grammar shows the hidden working of the mind, the laws of thought.”

“That early hieroglyphic you told me about,” said he, “of folding-doors and an ear, which meant ‘to listen,’ shows the same law of thought that our landlady has. What hidden force let her have only raw coolies for months after she sent off a trained servant for his thefts? We hear of their ‘high-binders’ and other secret societies. You have not known the last of that cur you whipped.”

“Pshaw! I soon start for China, anyway,” said I—“glad of the pay promised me there for three years, and tired of roughing it in Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona; but I wish—I wish I could have had a chance with your friends on California street.”

“I wish you had,” he said; “but never mind. You will have gained the Chinese language, and, judging by your feat of to-day,



the Chinamen had better not cross your path. Was it for this we moved to this house of seven gabbles?"

"For this," I answered, glumly. "Why did we move?" For we were scarcely settled. I came to be near Elinor, and Brande because he wished to be with me.

"There is the cause," he said, nodding toward the window as a gust of wind swept by. "People wonder at the roving impulse of the San Franciscans. It is the wind which urges and compels them to arise and go; it has even driven me to try and mock the monotone of its chant."

He took from his pocket and read to me these lines:

THE WIND! THE WIND! THE WIND!

Refrain, refrain, O wind! from such complaining,  
Or deign at last to make thy murmurs sane.  
Explain, explain thy pathos ever paining—  
Thy vain desire torments and tires my brain.  
Refrain! Refrain!

At last reveal how vanished ages freighted  
Thy voices with their added woe and pain;  
Forbear to mutter—I feel execrated.  
Urge not, for naught impatience can attain.  
Refrain! Refrain!



At last, at last, cease all thy raging clamor,  
 Nor beat and pant against my window-pane.  
 I listen now; at last thine eerie hammer  
 Mine ear hath welded for thy mystic strain —  
 Nay, crouch not nigh with clank of heavy chain.  
           Refrain!    Refrain!

At last thy blast, whose mocking threat just passed,  
 Must feign new breath.    What awful secret (lain  
 For ages in thy realm of space, too vast  
 For thought) shall thy next startling sounds contain?  
 I fain would flee — thy sighs constrain.  
           Refrain!    Refrain!

Insane, far-off, pathetic tones retaining,  
 No grain of all that caused them may remain;  
 Again renewing in thy wild campaigning  
     The strain of bugles under Charlemagne;  
 Again unearthly voices, summons feigning,  
     Ordain the death of Joan of Lorraine;  
 Again high shrieks that castle-turrets gaining  
     Thrill pain and dread through Cawdor's haunted  
         Thane;  
 Again low sighs (no bliss of love attaining)  
     That gain the longing lips of Iorn Elayne.  
 Mock strain and creak of hollow oak distraining  
     Profane magician Merlin in Bretagne.  
 Complain — the English peasant's ear detaining,  
     Remain to him the sad song of the Dane.  
 Draw rein, O souls of dead! who ride (retaining  
     A train of howling dogs) new souls to gain.  
 To vain and vague lament my thought constraining.  
           Refrain!    Refrain!



Though rain, though sun thine own rapt mood sustain-  
ing

Of vain regret, no more must thou complain,  
Nor strain to show, in depths and glooms remaining,  
Wild main and reefs that wrecked, old days of pain.  
Disdain, deride no more, my whole thought gaining  
With skein of subtle hints that are my bane ;  
Of rain that slants athwart mid-ocean plaining  
While train of shadows crosses heaven's plain,  
No reign of stars, nor moon whose crescent waning  
Might vein the purple dusk with amber stain ;  
Far lane of snow no mortal foot profaning,  
Moraine may lock, or iceberg rent in twain ;  
In chain of peaks, where thunder-clouds are gaining,  
Unslain old echoes rise and roll again —  
Again. Thine incantations oft sustaining  
With strain of distant bells that chimes maintain  
Ingrain with melancholy, hope quite draining,  
Like plaintive fall of castles built in Spain.  
O'erlain with laugh and yell and sob complaining,  
The train of sound is broken, scattered, slain.  
Regain, constrain to far and further waning —  
Refrain ! Refrain !

How reign such fancies? By thy weird ordaining,  
Or lain amid the fibres of my brain?  
The vane of thought turned by thy mournful plaining,  
Shrill strain of days remote and love long slain,  
Shows plain inheritance of grief pertaining  
To train of ancestors whose acts enchain —  
Old pain, far peaks of woe chill heights attaining,  
Faint stain of ancient crime starts out amain,  
The bane, the burden of Unrest remaining  
Through wane of ages though no clue is plain ;



Old vein volcanic, quicksands cruel feigning,  
Or main in tumult as chance gales constrain,  
My brain-palimpsest but dim trace containing,  
Made plain, O Wind! when thy fierce cries arraign.  
Refrain! Refrain!

As he ceased, the wind, which had thrust in its undertone of sympathy, rose so strongly that the house trembled like a boat, and in the close, creeping fog we might have been far out at sea, for any sign to be seen of the city below us. We sat in silence, broken suddenly by a quick, urgent knocking. Brande opened the door. Elinor's aunt stood there, looking wild. Without heeding him, she called to me:

"How *could* you do it? *Why* did you do it?"

"Because he insulted her," I stammered.

"He has done worse now!" she said.

"What do you mean?" asked Brande, while I stood in speechless wonder.

"I mean," said she, still looking at me, "that Nora brought some Chinese sweetmeats that she said you had sent Elinor, but it seems they were given her by Si-ki."

"By Si-ki!" we both cried.

"With word that they were what you had once promised to get for her."

"Well?" I gasped.



“Elinor, poor girl, at once tasted them—”

“And—”

“—and now lies senseless!”

“Great heavens!” cried Brande, turning to me. “Poisoned?”

“Poisoned!” I moaned.

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ACT II.

Chased by Brande as by a shadow, I in turn tracked two policemen, through a network of horror like a nightmare—through the foreign city in the heart of San Francisco, like a clingstone in its peach. In single file, dropping story below story under the sidewalks, we slipped and stumbled in mildew, damp, and dirt, where the coolies flitted round like gnomes, where no window let in light, no drain bore off bad air. We searched narrow galleries running everywhere, often bridging each other like those of an ant-hill, and dark ways where but one could pass. We bent at doorways that barred our path at sudden turns, peered into vile dens that lined the way, and, choking and strangling, climbed above ground, where we scanned the thousands of workmen in the many boot and shoe factories and cigar-works; hunted through the numberless gambling-hells,



but could not pass the old watchman, with wrinkled face like a baked apple, sitting on a stool in front of a red curtain (the color for luck), before he jerked the cord dangling near him, when bells warned, doors were barred, bolts shot like lightning, door upon door suddenly thrust itself across our path, or a screen slyly slid before us, turning us unaware into another passage. In this way, through secret signs, the whole ground-plan of a building would shift and dupe like a mirage. We might at last find a group of men merely talking, with neither dice, domino, dragon, or demon-pictured parchment card, button, nor brass ring, in sight—no copper with square centre hole, nor other trace of Fan-Tan; or find such utter darkness that fear seized us and drove us out. We viewed their pent, full workshops and boarding-houses, each story refloored once or twice between the first floor and ceiling, and their lodgings where they are shelved in tiers. We tried to find their courts of justice, but found secret laws within our laws, like puzzle in puzzle, and all in charge of the six-headed chief power, the strong Six Companies, from whose joint decree there is no appeal. All hedged from us by a Great Wall—of their language, for what I heard spoken was not the



written language I had learned from books—and of their ways, formed by such long, slow growth that it is the soul of their past ages which still lives—it is the same Chinese who lived before the flood who watch us now. Worn out, Brande and I started for home, but on the way stopped to see Tong-ko-lin-sing. He had been playing chess with his friend Si Hung Chang, who left as we went in, and he packed the chessmen in their box while he heard our tale, but said nothing. His face was a clear blank when Brande asked about secret societies. I tried all forms of begging and urging I could think of. He would not know what we meant. He offered us cigars, and took his pipe, as if he wished us to go—his own pipe, with a small tube on one side, in which to burn an opium-pill. Too dear to him to trust in the hands of a “foreign devil,” I had not been given a chance to touch it. Brande laid a large gold-piece on the table. Tong-ko-lin-sing smiled, wavered, but sank back into grave silence. Brande poured forth a stream of abuse. Tong-ko-lin-sing, bland and deaf, eyed his Lianchau coffin with pride, and fell into deep thought. I opened the door, and signed to Brande to follow me. He did so, swearing at the whole Chinese race as sly fools. We



were half-way downstairs, when Tong-ko-lin-sing shuffled out on the landing and called after us, the English words having a queer effect of centred force when intoned like Chinese :

“Red-haired devils ! barbarians ! all of you ! Like bears beating their stupid heads against the Great Wall. Are the black-haired people not your betters ? Great in mind as in numbers, did we not make paper and ink, and print, a thousand years before your time ?—and travel by a compass more than twenty-five hundred years before your Christ ?” He shuffled back, but swung out again to add : “Do we not excel in dyes, in sugar, in porcelain, gunpowder, and fireworks ?” He started toward his room, but turned back to cry : “Think of our secrets in the working of metals, our triumphs in the casting of bells, our magic mirrors which reflect what is wrought on their backs !” He seemed to have really done this time, but stopped in his door for this boast : “Look at our silk, cotton, linen, engraved wood and iron, carved ivory, bronze antiques, fine lacquer-work ! We make as brilliant figures in the universe as our rare colors on our famous pith-paper !” His grand air struck Brande as so absurd that in his nervous excitement he laughed. Tong-











ko-lin-sing darted out again, shaking his forefinger at us, as if in the Chinese game of Fi-fi, or like our "Fie! for shame!"

"You foreign devils would be wiser than your forefathers. You care nothing for the sages of old. What do you know of our three thousand rules and forms? You need a tribunal like ours at Peking, a Board of Rites!" Going through his door, he called over his shoulder: "What is your poor country? Not fit for our graves! To be happy on earth one must be born in Suchow, live in Canton, and die in Lianchau. T-r-r-r! Begone!"

I had gone back a few steps, and could see into his room. I heard a chuckle as his wide sleeve swept carelessly over the table as he went by it. He passed on. There was no money there.

"Who could have foreseen such a lecture from a jumping-jack in brocade drawers, tight to the ankle, and a loose blouse?" said Brande, as we hurried home. "He has the wholly irresponsible air of a clothier's sign-suit swinging in the wind, but he knows the points of the compass!"

We found Elinor seemed to have changed for the worse and still senseless. After Brande left me I sat in my window, too sad and too



tired to go to rest. I saw Goat Island loom large, but blurred by fog, like Heine's phantom isle, faint in the moonshine, where mists danced and sweet tones rang, but the lovers swam by, unblest, off into the wide sea. Elinor and I, too, had touched no isle of bliss, but passed comfortless into a sea of uncertainty which might widen into eternity. Sweet as it had been to be on the brink of owning our love, what would I not have given now to have some fond words?—even but one kiss, to recall in time to come if—I could not think of such a loss. I lighted my room, and tried to read or write, but in vain. I only thought of her. “Oh!” I groaned, “if I could have had some proof that she loved me!” As I sat, I saw in a long mirror the door behind me open, and—Elinor come! In misty white trailing robe, she looked unreal. Could it be, I thought, that they had left her alone to leave her room in a trance? A thrill of joy shot through me that she should even unconsciously come straight to me. I sprang to my feet and turned toward her—to find I was alone! I sank again in my chair. Was I losing my wits? No—she was there—there in the mirror, looking at me with the deepest woe in her face! She reached her arms to-



ward me, as if she longed to embrace me, and looked so sorry, so sorry for me.

“Did I stay with Tong-ko-lin-sing, and take opium again?” I murmured.

She made a gesture of farewell and half turned to go.

“Elinor! Elinor!” I cried.

A spasm of grief crossed her face. Filled with wonder, sorrow, and surprise, I rose again, but she made a motion of despair and left the room before I could turn. Did she go? Was she there, or was my brain wild? My own shadow, crossing the ceiling toward the door as I moved, startled me. Had I not read of the ill-will between shadows and the beings that live in mirrors? Mad I should surely be if I stayed longer alone; yet I opened the door most unwillingly. The dim hall was still and vacant. I went to Elinor's door. Her aunt said for the last half-hour they had not felt sure she was not dead, but there had just come back signs of life; they could see that she breathed again. The doctor had slight hope. She gave me a slip of paper covered with Elinor's dainty penciling.

“I found that in Elinor's pocket,” she said, “in the dress she wore when out with you yesterday. I thought you would like to read



it." And the grim, old woman really looked with pity at me.

I wrung her hand, and rushed to my room to read :

THE LOST PLEIAD.

*"Merope mortalis nupsit."*

Spellbound, by planet that I fain would spurn,  
To circle like the forms in poet's soul,  
Like them for starry heights to madly yearn,  
Yet feel the tension of the Earth's control,  
And ever drifting seem  
Like blossom floating down restraining stream.

Through vast cloud-spaces, up and down I wheel,  
While years, like vagrant winds, shift far below;  
The stillness of the upper air I feel  
Is like the rest the immortals ever know.

Here I forget how man  
Through haste and strife his life can merely plan.

His life, like that reflected in a glass,  
Knows not the sweep of that among the gods —  
Has its set limits that he may not pass  
Except he vow himself to Art's long odds,  
And Sorrow's eyes of woe  
Must some time fix on each with baleful glow.

More wise than man the acts of Nature are —  
The little dewdrop pearling twilight leaf  
Will take unto its inmost heart a star  
Which mortals give but careless glance and brief,  
Nor heed when slants the sun  
What mystic signs gleam red, gold clouds upon.



Forlorn, I fail forever Pleiad height —

Float downward just above the phantom realm  
Where Fame and Beauty, Love and Power, take flight,  
Fate ever whirling after to o'erwhelm.

See rise the Day's bold crown,  
Or muffled Night with stolen stars slink down.

With slow pulse poise while moonless midnights pass,

And vivid on the velvet dark is lain,  
By memory painted, that sweet time — alas! —  
When yet I knew, as nymph in Dian's train,  
The gods, the stars, the tides,  
The sylvan fauns and satyrs — naught besides.

Not for the goddess, stag, and hunt, I sigh.

Nor for my sister Pleiades above,  
As for the blissful moments long gone by  
In rapture and despair of mortal love.

This is the potent spell  
Which sends me drifting down the cloud-sea swell!

“It cannot be!” I cried, with bursting heart. “Our drama is not ended. Somewhere, some time, it must go on, even though she passes now behind the green curtain of a grassy grave!”

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### ACT III.

The next day found no change in Elinor, and found us again with the policemen, hunting Chinatown. Standing on corners while a drove of coolies passed, crowding and bleating



like sheep, or the din of funeral music jarred on our nerves; down in cellars, damp and green and gloomy as sea-caves, and the roar of the city overhead not unlike that of the sea; up on roofs as cheerless to live on as leafless trees, but full of coolies, like chattering monkeys—no jungle of a Chinese forest less fit for human life. And through it all I was haunted by thoughts of happy hours I had passed with Elinor, which came back like scenes in another life, as if I had already gone down to hell—dewy garden-alleys with fountains and whispering shrubs, blossoms and bird-songs, radiance, bloom and sweet scent, all that gave a charm to life—unlike this foul quarter as a perfect poem to vile doggerel, music to discord, light to dark. One Chinaman we saw everywhere; on a corner across the way; at the head of steps as we were coming up; at the foot of the stairs when we were on a roof; bowing at a shrine with gold and saffron legends and scarlet streamers round the door, and through the dim inner light and scent of burning sandal-wood, the gleam of tinsel and flare of lamp, before an ugly image; in one of what Brande called their chop-(stick)-houses, feasting on shark's-fin or bird's-nest soup; watching a group in a wash-house who



play Fi-fi to see who shall pay for a treat of tea; in a barber-shop, among those undergoing dainty cleansing of eyes, ears, and nostrils, trimming and penciling of eyebrows and lashes; or at a market-stall (kept in the window of some other kind of shop), haggling for pork, or fish, or fowl—its only stock; always in the background of our scene, even in the theatre, watching the ground and lofty tumbling, until the crowd and noise and bad air forced us to leave, when, as I came out last of our party, I nearly fell over him.

“Tong-ko-lin-sing!”

“Why all this trouble for a woman?” he asked, gravely. “Women are plenty, for to become one is a future punishment of ours for sin when men. I have seen her with you; she wore the tiger’s-claw jewelry you got through me. Like most American women, she would not make a ‘mother of Meng,’ our wise woman, who has passed into a proverb. Then she wore black, which is ill-luck for body and mind.”

Nothing could have better set off Elinor’s golden hair and fresh daisy-bloom than the soft laces and black velvet she had so often worn beside me at concert or play. I could almost see her again with me at the thought.



I drew a deep sigh. "Where is Si-ki?" I cried, making a vain clutch at Tong-ko-lin-sing's sleeve. But the others had turned back for me, and my Chinese teacher's jacket and cap of black astrakhan fur soon melted into the darkness of some too near alley. Had he followed us all day from mere curiosity, or could he help us? We went to his door, but knocked in vain, though we all saw a line of light under his door as we went upstairs, not there when we came down. Disheartened, we went home. Elinor had not changed. We could not try to sleep, but sat in my room.

"I wish," said Brande, "you looked as full of life and joy as you did the last time I saw you come home with Miss Elinor."

"O Noel!" I cried, "if I could but live over that last happy day, when to see her by me was thrilling as music, when to breathe the same air was exciting as wine!"

"Like Socrates under the plane-tree," he mused, "'borne away by a divine impression coming from this lovely place.'"

"Yes," I said; "life was all changed, my soul was no more pent by bodily bounds, my eyes saw everything by an inner light which made all fair."

"That reminds me," said he, "of some



verses about the picture over Miss Elinor's piano."

He searched his note-book, found, and read:

AN INTERLUDE.

Tall candles and a wood-fire's fitful burning  
Seem like a spell to conjure from the wall  
One picture's living eyes, which, though returning  
To shadows that engulf, hold me in thrall.

Against the wall a sad musician leaning  
Across the strings has lain caressing bow,  
But pauses for some thought that intervening  
Yet holds him waiting, listening so.

As if of life so near, yet far on-flowing,  
Some consciousness had thrilled and made him know  
And long to step into the circle, showing  
Such charmed one within the hearth-fire's glow.

My life, like his, is picturesque, transcending  
What can be felt, or heard, or seen, except  
When passing flashes of emotion, lending  
Some added senses, over me have swept.

More sad, more glad, and more enchanting —  
And my existence may to angels seem  
Like that of phantom through dim vapors flaunting,  
Forever near some vague, elusive dream.

Perchance they mark *me* pause and look and listen,  
In some bright moment's exaltation brief,  
As if, though circling shadows oft imprison,  
*My* music waits but for a turning leaf!



““Spirits in prison,”” said I; “where do you think they go when first set free?—to another world, or to the dearest friend in this?”

“That would depend,” he answered, “upon the kind of spirit that goes. One like Miss Elinor now—”

“Do not speak of her death,” I cried; “though I have thought before that you did not like her.”

“No,” said he, “I do not, but with no reason. It is a mere feeling that repels, and did at first sight, lovely as she is. I need not speak of her death to say that her spirit is one that would—”

I started. Elinor had come in at the door behind him, and stood looking at me, making a sign of caution, as if she did not wish Brande to know of her presence. What had brought her to my room? She looked very shadowy in sweeping, misty robes and floating hair. Perhaps she was not in her right mind. I was sorely vexed to have Brande see her come to me. I had even wild thoughts of blindfolding him, while she should have time to flee.

“What is it?” he asked. “You look as if you saw a ghost.”

“Nothing,” I faltered. While I wondered







"Let me go!" I panted.

"I cannot let you dash your brains out against the wall," he said.

I made one more vain strain to leave my seat. He held me in a grasp of iron.

"What shall I do?" he groaned to himself, and turned white about the lips, for unseen I had made out to draw my pistol from my pocket, and now suddenly held it toward him.

"Yorke Rhys!" he shouted, but did not let go his hold.

How can I tell it? The room turned black to me. Then I found Elinor had fled, and my friend lay at my feet with a bullet through his heart!

I have a confused remembrance of the boarders rushing in. I knew the glint of the French lady's diamond ear-drops, and the down on her opera-cloak, just from the theatre, the wrought band of the German professor's smoking-cap, and the palm-leaves on the Spanish lady's cashmere shawl, thrown over her night-robcs as she came from her bed. They thought Brande had shot himself, for I sat there vaguely asking over and over:

"Why did he do it?"

There was a murmur of "Don't tell him." The crowd gave way for Elinor's aunt, who



came and laid my head against her breast in dear motherly fashion.

“What does Elinor want?” I asked. “She has just been here.”

She only said, “Poor boy!” and smoothed my hair.

Something in their faces smote me with dread. “He is out of his head!” they whispered.

“Tell me,” I urged, “where is Elinor? She was here just now.”

The Spanish and the French lady looked inquiringly at Elinor’s aunt. I turned my face up to hers just in time ere I lost my senses (or did that make me faint?) to see her lips shape the words:

“Elinor died just now!”

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#### ACT IV.

I lay on my bed, dimly aware of a long, slow lapse of time. Was it of weeks, months, or years? I could not tell. Sometimes I saw the sunshine veer round the room, and knew day after day passed, but not how many. Some of the boarders came and went, to my dull senses like visions in dreams: the French lady, trim and straight, nodded and twinkled



past, whiffs from the German professor's pipe curled near me, the tinkle of the Spanish lady's guitar rang faint and far. Elinor's aunt had often shaken and smoothed my pillow, but I did not know why nor how I came to be in this weak state of mind and body, and no one spoke of it to me even after I could sit up, till one day Nora brought me a folded page of note-paper, which, she said, fell from my clothes when I was undressed the night I fainted, and she had kept it for me, "because it had Miss Elinor's writing on it." It was "The Lost Pleiad." All my weight of woe dropped on me anew. I knew what star had fallen from my sky.

"You kept it for me all this time?" I said, as I gave her some money. "I suppose I was sick some weeks."

"Months," she answered.

I sighed. How much in debt such long idleness and illness must have brought me! And I must have lost my chance for work in China. Letters must be written. I opened my desk. It had not been locked, and a pile of receipted board and doctor's bills I had never seen lay in it, with a letter dated the very day that Elinor—that Noel—that I fell ill, from Brande's friends on California Street. It told me that



through his strong efforts I was given a place with them, which made sure the income I had longed for to let me marry and stay in my own country. They had kept the place waiting for me, and meanwhile paid my bills. Through Brande's influence! And I had killed my best friend! I gasped for air, opened the windows and walked the room. I could trace my troubles all back to that infernal Si-ki. Hastily making ready, I stole out unseen, and rushed to Tong-ko-lin-sing. As I went in, his Tien-Sien lark was filling the room with its song, standing on the floor of its cage, which was on the table in front of his master, who sat reading in his bamboo easy-chair. Tong-ko-lin-sing was struck with the change in me, and wished to talk of it.

"I must find Si-ki," I said.

"In a field of melons do not pull up your shoes," said he; "under a plum-tree do not adjust your cap. If I go with you, it will look as if I knew where to find him. I do not."

"You can find him. You must hunt for him," I persisted.

It was like talking to a blank wall. He was unmoved except to ask:

"The lady—?"

"Is dead. I must *find* Si-ki."



Quite shocked that I should be so straightforward, he said: "She has ascended to the skies?"

I nodded impatiently.

"To what sublime religion did she belong?" he asked.

I told him. I piled a small heap of gold and silver on the table under his eyes.

He spoke in high praise of her faith, but added:

"Religions are many. Reason is one. We are all brothers."

While speaking, he put the money out of sight, hung up the bird-cage, and opened his door.

We searched parts of Chinatown which would have been barred to me without a Chinese comrade; underground depths, like the abysses after death; upper stories and roofs of buildings that towered in air as if striving for space to breathe; narrow, crooked alleys, where loungers talked across from windows about the American straying there, and seemed to think I was led by Tong-ko-lin-sing because in some way his prisoner. He offered odd trifles from the depths of his sleeves, in small pawn-shops, which held queer gatherings—pistols of all styles, daggers, even the



fan-stiletto, clothes, beds and bedding, tea, sugar, clocks, china, and ornaments. He called on large warehouses, where the heads of great firms met us; and behind huge jars the size of men, wrought silk screens, giant kites, odd baskets, and gay china, but not beyond the queer foreign scent of such stores, we were given rare tea in tiny cups holding no more than our dessert-spoons. He drew me through woodyards and vegetable gardens, and over fish-dryers' sheds. All knew and looked up to Tong-ko-lin-sing as one who knew the written language, but could not help him. He went to the Six Companies; but neither the Ning Yang, which owns the most men in San Francisco, nor the Sam Yup, which sends the most men to other States; neither the Hop Wo, nor the Kong Chow, nor the other two, nor the great washhouse company, could or would tell us anything. One after another he asked the throng of small curbstone dealers, the pipe-cleaners, cigarette-rollers, vegetable or sweetmeat venders, and cobblers, even the gutter-snipes.

At last, the cobbler who always sits on the south side of Clay Street, just below Dupont, told him something which I did not catch, but he heard with a start. He wavered and urged



me to give up the search. I would not. He set off a new way, and soon darted into an alley full of the grimy, blackened buildings which can never be used after the Chinese have lived in them, whose dark horrors recalled some scene elsewhere known—in what past age? I saw round me only the signs of a civilization older than the Pharaohs. I heard the twang and squeak of rude instruments, which, two thousand years before the three-stringed rebec (sire of our violin) was heard in Italy, played in balmy tea-gardens these same old songs of love, difficulty, and despair. Here crowded the strange buildings, here crouched the quaint shadows of an Oriental city, known to me—when? where? in some dark-hued picture?

As Tong-ko-lin-sing started down some breakneck steps, I stopped a moment for breath, and looked around me. A street-lamp lighted a Chinese poster close by me, a signed and sealed notice from the Chin Mook Sow society, offering a thousand dollars, not for the taking of two offenders, but for their assassination! I shuddered and crawled down the narrow, shaky stairs. On the last landing from which I could see the narrow strip of sky, I looked up. Two great golden planets watched



me. I groaned and went on. I felt the crooks of this under-world soon shut all out, like a coffin-lid. My love was dead. My friend was murdered. I cursed aloud. I followed Tong-ko-lin-sing only by the strained tension of my nerves, through which I saw him in the dark, as plain as if in light, and heard him muttering in Chinese, monotonous as the shrilling of the wind far overhead. He went in at a door—through a long passage that had a strange smell that made me feel faint, a smell of death—till, after a moment's pause, as if to make sure he was right, and giving me a warning touch, he opened a door into a dimly lighted den, while the sickening scent grew worse.

“Si-ki!” he called.

What was this ghostly form, white as a skeleton, which slowly glimmered through the gloom before my amazed eyes? Dizzy from the fetid scent, yet held by my horror as by transfixing spear, with failing heart and quaking limbs, I saw the ghastly figure cross the rotten, slimy floor toward us.

“My dream! My dream!” I murmured as I clung to Tong-ko-lin-sing for support.

An awful voice, discordant as a Chinese gong, the hollow voice of a leper, a voice un-



earthly as if we had been shades met in another world, cried:

“Between us two!    *Between us two!*”



A GRACIOUS VISITATION.







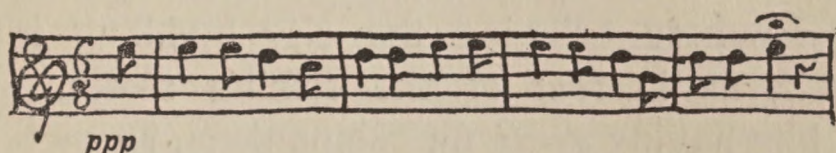
## A GRACIOUS VISITATION.

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All those strange things and secret decrees and unrevealed transactions, which are above the clouds and far beyond the regions of the stars, shall combine in ministry.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Who sleeps on graves, rises mad, or a poet.—*Tzigane Proverb.*

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The first time so faint and far that I could not tell it from the hauntings of the inner ear known to all musicians, the chance strains evoked for me by the differing keys of the fog signals.

I lived in a region of remote sounds. On Russian Hill I looked down as from a balloon; all there is of the stir of the city comes in distant bells and whistles, changing their sound, just as the scenery moves, according to the state of the atmosphere. The islands shift as if enchanted, now near and plain, then removed and dim. The bay widening, sapphire blue, or narrowing, green and gray, or, before



a storm, like quicksilver. The hills over the water drawing close, green or snowy, showing whether their buildings miles away are of brick or wood, or all is thrust into blue distance, or brushed away, a bank of fog looking as if the world reached no farther. The city lights twinkling of long lines of romances or hidden by the gray slides that shut off all in life but the wails of warning to the sailors. Great heat spreading stretches, as of piles of white wool upon the water. Sharp edges everywhere bringing the city huddling into itself, as in fear of the coming storm. It is like having *genii* for companions, so picturesque and constantly varying are the alternate movement and exchange of currents from the sea of air and the sea of water, tremendous forces of life, showing me personality, pulse and arteries, as traced by Maury, who even suggests for the ocean a heart—the equator. Their companionship enlarges and enriches the mind, the air uplifting with its symbolic effects, the sea responding to movements of far-off worlds, and a highway for distant nations.

I watched not only our steamers and ferry-boats and yacht-races, like a flock of white birds hovering over the blue, but Arctic whaler, South Sea trader, Mexican, Chilean,



and Peruvian coaster, Chinese junk, Australian and Japanese merchantmen, Malay *prahu*, double-decker, corvette, frigate, men-of-war under all flags.

Never again my husband's ship, never again!

To have my house full of *curios* he had brought from long voyages, and to be able to always look at the shipping on the water, was some comfort for the sore heart that sought loneliness as a wounded animal hides. At first there were long, wakeful nights, when I sat in my window, till the harbor-lights grew like dear friends. Gradual healing came, in the stillness which makes the town, although within stone's throw below, seem yet unbuilt; on the pure blasts from mid-ocean spaces where none have breathed; in the gorgeous sunsets that give the meanest Cinderella the freedom of fairy cities; in never-to-be-forgotten cloud effects, as when the aërial sea hints knowledge of ocean depths, showing mackerel spots or the Pope's signet, once, a perfect skeleton of a whale, and, before a tempest, a gigantic, livid hand, with its Saturn finger torn out, pointed long toward the Golden Gate, as if calling up a gale, or signalling its coming from thousands of miles at sea. Often



the whole sky was of such terrific import that I feared Michelet's waves, like a mob of eyeless, earless beasts, foaming at the mouth, demanding universal death, suppression of the earth, and return to chaos; but I learned that a dread menace of the sky may mean nothing here, ending in dire effects on distant waters. I had no longer to fear for my husband's ship. I could enjoy seeing a storm sweep in, slowly blotting Gate, Presidio, Tamalpais, and Angel Island, in my view hours before its descent upon the eastern side of the town; or black clouds as of thunder over Tamalpais fringe into trailing wreaths like smoke that blow inland, shaking loose rafter and blind, and rattling door-lock; or hearing a gale beating doors and windows, threatening down the chimney, straining to lift the whole house, and shrieking in wrath about it.

All this made the busy streets very dull. Born with a sort of temperamental *hasheesh* in my veins which makes a book affect like a whirlwind, a picture soothe as manna from Heaven, a piece of music seem crushing disaster, I lived in exciting times, as if always looking on at the opera of the Flying Dutchman. This led to my rhyming about one of its airs.



## SPINNING SONG.

*Wagner-Listz.*

I turn the wheel of thrumming whir,  
Hear tread of life and love and hate.  
I burn, I feel through humming stir  
The thread is rife with grief and fate.  
Witch-cat light purring, purring light,  
Breathe of high wind by wizard sold,  
White horses' flight in rushing might  
By lashing blast alone controlled.

*Yo-ho-ho-ho! Yo-ho-ho-ho!*

Far sailor-cries float, dinning long,  
Blend billowy, fray in thinning throng,  
I thrill, I play the spinning song.

Twirl, wheel, whose magic moan and drone  
Shades golden hope with tint of gloom.  
Whirl, wheel, whose tragic monotone  
Braids holden scope with hint of doom.  
The wheel—the wheel—the wheel—the wheel—  
Dream-spinner moving to and fro—  
Night hours reveal a plunging keel  
Where rolling gale and breakers blow.

*Yo-ho-ho-ho! Yo-ho-ho-ho!*

Far sailor-cries float, dinning long,  
Veer billowy, stray in thinning throng.  
Sheer thrill, I play the spinning song.

Roll, fashion murmur, in thy gyre,  
Of seashells' muffling, that is yet  
Dole, passion, all the world's desire,  
Brief foam-bells ruffling our veins' fret.



Glide, slurring, slurring wheel, go round,  
Mock cordage-wail of fated sail  
Make blurring, blurring of a sound  
As if all frail hearts did bewail.

*Yo-ho-ho-ho! Yo-ho-ho-ho!*

Far sailor-cries float, dinning long,  
Blown billowy, spray in thinning throng.  
I thrill, I play the spinning song.

In vain my friends, toiling up to see me, urged me to move, saying it was not safe for me to live there alone. I never felt lonely. If not playing or reading, I had my reveries. In these, since living here, the same scenes came again and again, as if people sitting by me had always the same thoughts which I grew to know, as my husband and I from long companionship read each other's minds. I saw granite quays, a vast city of miles of straight lines, utterly flat; against its pale sky minarets and domes of pink and gray, as of great Babylon blushing into view through the mist of time. Was I looking through telescope at a dead world, or was this an immense, vague, dreary marsh? A bog, snow-weighted alders and willows here and there, and endless rows of stakes along a plank-road. Big moose with branching antlers, wolves shaggy and dark, outlined against a moon-lit horizon. Black







yet, as he says, all the sea, the breath of space, cries from wrecks, the mirth and the terror of the sailor's hard life are there, and heard at sunset it has the melancholy grandeur of an evocation of Night. How often my husband and I had together listened to it, the favorite "*chantez*" of a French sailor who voyaged with him for years! Ah! that very day the Russian priest had read in my face a famished heart.

Looking down upon the Latin Quarter, with its rows of prim Boston houses, its Mexican corner-stores, its French tiny conservatory-fronts, the buildings showing the mingling of foreign elements in its people, "the characteristic Russian fleck of gold upon green" shows the Greek church. I liked to go there sometimes, for the reverent attitude of a standing congregation, the priests in picturesque hats and brocade robes, upon carpets spread for them, the swinging censer, burning tapers, and chanting of stately music of the fifteenth century, allowing neither voice of organ nor of woman. Here I listened to a relic of days of hiding in catacombs, the thrilling Greater Compline, with its striking effect of choirs upon opposite sides bandying like a ball four exultant words. The choirs alternate through



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twenty-six phrases, all ending in "God is with us!" which is at last sung by the united voices. It is like hearing the earnest prophet Isaiah himself, for his are the words. Thus I came to know one of the priests, a stately old man whose look was that of a human-faced bull of Nineveh. I like to think I had a share in what Aivasovsky painted, that arrival of relief from America to the famine-stricken Riazan. By hard work I was able to collect a large sum for that fund. When, on this day, I gave it to the priest he said, after thanking me:

"You have a sad face, Mrs. Trevelyan. Few of us get through this battle of life unscarred. I have known so many, so many of the wounded. To those who live here for years it is a city of haunted corners, haunted not only by our own old footsteps and hopes that rose and fell to their beat, but by knowledge that here was a suicide, there a murder, hither and yon the vague "found dead." You look like a Russian friend of years ago. It is one of those chance resemblances of face, or figure, or voice, that are so strange—so sweet—so sad. For life has its haunted corners, too, with their own tragedies. Bitter is a famine of the heart! I shall pray for your peace."



His lofty, Mithraic head-gear did not mar the remains of romantic blonde beauty. As I looked at him I wondered what heartbreak he had known or caused. He gave me a costly *icon*, the Madonna and Child with gold-winged angels round them, all the faces finely painted on porcelain, and silver arabesques hiding the figures.

On my way home I went on the green hill-top. All the southern portion of the city was shrouded in smoke, it towered above in the Afrite columns of the Arabian Nights, it spread low like a tumultuous ocean, no more of the town in sight than as if the Last Hour had long been burning it. Against the east side of the Swedenborgian minister's hermitage a tall clump of scarlet passion-flowers added its solemn legend to the scene. It was a purple and white one I had known running over the door of my eastern home. The crown of thorns, sponge, scourge, nails, and five wounds in this bloody guise cast a weird gloom as if I had met the Witch of Endor. Grave and tired I turned homeward. The owner of a fine house near had gone abroad, the care-taker, a sad woman who had known better days, stood at the gate as I passed.

"I hate to go in!" said she. "The house



looks bigger and darker and more lonesome every night! How strange it is that you are never afraid! There has been so much crime here lately, too."

I said some cheering words to her. When I reached my house I looked back; she still stood there. I thought I would go over later and keep her company a while.

Alone, thinking of her, of the starving Russians, and of the priest's words, an old "charm" came into mind, and set me to rhyming an appeal, not for myself alone, though worded so, but meant as for all stricken and despairing.

#### THE RUNE OF THE HEALING.

Come! forces of an ancient "healing charm,"  
Begged of soft heart and lofty soul its balm.

Deeper than plummet fall  
It has no limitary,  
In height or breadth no thrall:

*Help! by the heart of Mary!*

*Help! by the soul of Paul!*

Aid, O, brave mother-heart, full heart of Mary,  
For one decree we know:

"A sword shall pierce through thine own soul!" Nor  
vary

Our souls, white shields, all show  
Like pure Sir Galahed's—  
A red cross come and go.



Rossini's *Inflammatus*, wild appealing,  
Breathes, fitly, pathos, passion, depth of feeling,  
In keen, uplifting ecstasy revealing  
    My heart inflamed for thee,  
    Thy heart aglow for me!

Hear both mild reed, bluff brass, imploring, soaring,  
    "I weep! I weep! I weep!"  
Ineffable the agony adoring,  
    Sigh upon sigh doth leap,  
    Grief rippling eddy spreads,  
    The strings in shudder keep.  
"Because unloved, unloved, goes Love, so tender!"  
Let me be one with thee, Great Heart — surrender —  
Melt into thee — there let me glide — Befriender!  
    The music-tide at neap —  
    While — in — I — trembling — creep!

Kind Powers of overwhelming awe and might!  
Immortal allies against mortal plight!  
    The ages cannot pall  
    Confiding tributary  
    That cries when ills befall:  
    *Help! by the heart of Mary!*  
    *Help! by the soul of Paul!*

Aid me, high soul of Paul, illuminating  
    The way through dark and mire.  
Soul of Initiate, irradiating  
    Cheer from Eternal Fire.  
    Like pure Sir Galahad's,  
    Thy strength can never tire.



Thou great Intelligences close beholding,  
Thine things unseen, and the unknown, unfolding  
All mysteries that life and death are moulding,  
    To thee naught can be dire,  
    Thy fervor I desire.

Of vast depths open to thy thought's entreating  
    What daring hints are thine,  
Impassioned mystic! "Grace and peace" thy greeting,  
    For to thy wisdom fine  
    Move with commingling threads  
    The earthly and divine.  
Thy meditation as a planet beaming,  
Thy intuition like a meteor streaming,  
Thy revelation light from Heaven gleaming,  
    Let faith and hope combine  
    With love, the greatest, mine!

    Heart  
That grieved and pitieth even passing smart —  
    Soul  
Caught up into wide vision of the whole —  
    Hark to the eager call  
    From life but fragmentary  
    To love fulfilling all:  
    *Help! by the heart of Mary!*  
    *Help! by the soul of Paul!*

I went to a window, thinking about going to  
cheer the care-taker, and the sunset kept me  
there. The usual bands of rose and turquoise  
of our twilight horizon were not to be seen;  
the whole sky was dappled in pink as often by







the Complaint of the Three Mariners. Close by came men's voices in cooing, sputtering Russ. Sailors often climbed up the hill to look at the sea, as actors enjoy the theatre.

Now, the words came back to me :

“We were two, we were three,  
We were three mariners  
Of Groix.”

When I answered a knock at my door five unknown Russians, sailors, by their bronzed faces and the dress of three of them, stood bowing before me.

“Mrs. Trevelyan,” said the handsome leader, a haughty Pole in fur pelisse and cap, “my name is Vladimir Stroganoff. I am the supercargo of the Stormy Petrel. We know of your interest in Russia and call to pay our respects.”

The second, a fine-looking gentleman, wore a blue coat with gold buttons, a gold plate on the shoulder with raised crown and stars and a number, and a very white flat-topped cap. He said: “I am Boris Volokhoff, formerly of the Russian navy; later, master of the Jolly Polly.”

How could a master-mariner's widow refuse? I thought they knew the priest. I let them in.



The third was a big, clumsy man of overbearing way, with a whiskey-bottle sticking out of his pocket, outlined through his old blue boat-cloak with a look of hoar frost upon it, the salt of what far seas! "I am Dmitri Dmitrivitch, second mate of the Stormy Petrel," he blustered. "I want to say to you, Mrs. Trevelyan, you are the one woman in ten that we Russians say has a soul!"

The other two were in sailor suits. The fourth was a wiry man, with onyx eyes and the indrawn gaze of the wizard Finns; his hair was like Finland granite, reddish speckled with gray; he wore ear-rings. On his shoulder, also bowing to me, perched a tiny monkey, as if his familiar.

He and the boy bowed first to the *icon*. Then he said: "I am Alexis Prayrafsky; and this boy," motioning toward the last one, "is Ivan Bitiagofsky, both of us seafaring men, sailor and cabin-boy of the Stormy Petrel."

The boy was a sad-faced Kalmuck, wearing one big earring. He handed me some flowers. The monkey hurried down to present one to me and dashed back up his master's arm.

"The castor-oil tree in your garden," said the captain, "looks like an old friend. My father had a plantation of it."



"It pleases us," said the supercargo, "to find here our petunias, marigolds, daisies, verbenas, red poppies and thyme."

"Have you been here long?" I asked.

"Well—yes—some time," said he; "we are—so to speak—marooned."

I concluded they were changing ships.

"You find this a contrast to the bigness and flatness of St. Petersburg," said I.

"There's nothing here like St. Isaac's; that cost millions," the boy burst forth. "To gild the copper of the cupola fourteen bushels of English ducats were melted down. Fourteen bushels of ducats! Our Nevsky shrine is a pyramid fifteen feet high, a ton and a half of pure silver!"

"You would like Gautier's words about St. Petersburg," said I,—“a city of gold upon a horizon of silver.”

"Our sky," said the supercargo, "is never sapphire; it is like opal or the chill blue of steel."

"Always," added the captain, "like late afternoon on your Atlantic coast."

"There are times when this looks like a foreign seaport," I said, "when the water seems to have risen and crowded the city under the hills; there are views from these



corners satisfying as food, like the eastward glimpse from Jackson and Taylor streets."

"The water is always threatening," said the Finn, "to carry out the Mexican monk's old prophecy of this city's drowning."

"There are none of these illusions on the stern coast of the prim Puritans and their descendants," said the captain. "Mirage belongs to a different class of people."

"An atmosphere of miracle," I said, "suits a city of a saint."

"We have no begging friars in Russia," the mate boomed at me in a hoarse voice. "It is not your St. Francis that interests Russians, but your bear, the favorite animal of our St. Sergius."

The boy had run to a window. "Look!" he cried. "A shooting star! Come to fetch souls!"

I saw a glance of meaning going from one to another till all five had caught it.

"One of our superstitions," said the captain.

I brought forward my *samovar* and made tea, serving it in their fashion in glasses, with lemon and big lumps of sugar for them to hold and nibble now and then, the monkey joining in this. The Kalmuck slyly spilled drops



toward the north, south, east, and west, like the tribute paid by the New Mexican Indians.

"I used to wish," said I, "that my husband would go to Russia to bring me beautiful things made there."

They glanced at each other. Presently the supercargo drew from his pocket and showed me bracelets of globes of crystal and of amethyst. The Finn had a spoon carved by monks with the text: "Seek by prayer and supplication." Stroganoff brought out a necklace of rose tourmalines set with diamonds. The sailor showed turquoises from the old mines of Nishapur, dozens set in rolls of wax. The mate's boat-cloak had hidden bolts of tissues woven with gold and silver threads, and slippers of gay morocco covered with gold embroidery. Volokhoff showed a brooch of exquisite *niello* work, and then a Moldavian woman's necklace of gold coins. The monkey darted upon their glitter and ran home proudly wearing it.

I vainly tried to buy some of the finery. They beamed upon me with smiling refusal that showed their gleaming teeth. "No, no; not these," they said, and put them away.

"I would like to show you some Russian ornaments a neighbor has," I said; "we cannot tell the inscriptions."



I started toward the door. There was a general rising. I found myself surrounded and got back to my chair, but in the gentlest manner, by my big-waisted, baby-eyed callers.

"No," said the captain; "let us look at your *curios*."

They politely feigned interest in what could not have been new to them: costly shawls of palm-leaf covered Cashmere, and heavily embroidered crape, of which, with Flemish guipure lace, I had made *portières* and mantel-drapery; French trifles in porcelain, gold, and ivory; crystal and gold perfume-caskets, a fan that was Pompadour's, some Sèvres cups and saucers; rare old amber Satsuma jars; huge polar-bear skins; wide-spread antlers; carved tusks, odd bronzes, Parian statuettes and groups; an emu's egg of palest green, a large fan of white peacock feathers, a carved teak-wood table from India; a cherry-stone bracelet bearing three years of Chinese carving; bits of the Constitution, the Bounty, and the first Atlantic cable; from Corea a carved tortoise-shell necklace and box topped with dragons and a little ivory god that was never to be laid on its back or it would bring ill-luck on the one who gave it to my husband,—her family had owned it for three



centuries; things collected through many years, numberless, of varying worth, but some of extreme value.

The Russians vied with each other in trying to please me with stories. The mate told of trees of seaweed, mountain-ranges of coral, and great grottoes of amber. The supercargo named treasures of the Troitsa monastery: coats of mail wrought with verses from the Koran; the chain of the first of the Roman-offs, every link with an engraved prayer and one of the Czar's titles, ninety-nine in all; Gospels encrusted with gems and clasped by cameos; diamond-set chalices; and brocade dalmatics worked with flowers in precious stones. The captain mentioned the African trees of silver-gray, where the gray parrots roost unseen.

The boy told of the Granovitaïa Palata, the Facet Palace, the whole inside known as the Gilded Room, its gold walls covered with dark paintings and legends in the fine old Slavonic letters, the very height of the dazzling, gloomy, and imposing. "It is like walking in a story-book," he said.

They were all pleased with a pastel an artist friend had made for lines of mine, which he had framed beneath it.



## A FOG.

Dim, shifting shape, the buildings loom afar,—  
Is it a driving snowstorm held in air?  
Almost I hear the sleigh-bells' beating jar  
White silence sound but faintly can impair  
In scene like crystal ball of icy glare,  
For Memory, mystic seer its visions are!  
Dim, shifting shape the buildings loom afar,—  
Is it a snowfall spellbound in the air?

I watch o'er tufted palm the evening-star.  
Then aërial currents drifting, duping, snare,  
The wailing fog-horn warns of harbor-bar,  
On far-off frosty road I seem to fare.  
Dim, shifting shape, the buildings loom afar,—  
Is it a film of snowflakes charmed in air?

"A fog is as mysterious as beautiful," said the captain. "There is a wide difference in the stillness inside and outside. It has interspaces where sound never penetrates; this causes wreck even near fog-whistles."

"In the next house," said I, "they have a pastel much like this, but larger, by the same artist; let me borrow it to show you."

Again I had almost reached the hall. Then the supercargo was politely leading me across the room, and the others were between me and the door.

"Do not take the trouble," they were all gently saying.



"Let the Finn show you some of his sorcery," said the captain.

At once the sailor's arms were waving, and the air was full of flying cards which returned to him and were caught by monkey as well as by master. Through our silence of watching him there came once a sound like a faraway cry, and again I saw that meaning look go round. Stroganoff begged for music. I played Glinka and Rubinstein. Volokhoff sang a Muscovite love-song, a mingling of joy and grief; a smothered fire, the southern sun and northern gloom. Dmitrivitch began to bellow:

"Five betel-nut palms of Bombay," in tones of a fog-horn, but was checked by the captain. Stroganoff played strains of Tschaikowsky's pathetic symphony, showing me the trombones' heart-broken cries, dying away, one by one, at the close.

"Like expiring torches at a midnight funeral," said he.

"Molière's!" I suggested.

"Juliet's," he said.

"Why," I asked, "do people speak as if deep feeling could be only in play or song or story?"

"Lord love ye, ma'am!" roared the big



mate, "we could spin you yarns that beat playhouse and book all to tatters."

"I should like nothing better," said I.

"Tell her," said the boy, "about the galleon foundered off Acapulco with crusadoes of gold, chests of pieces of eight, wrought crucifixes of precious ore, gold and silver bars, silks, spices, costly tea, chocolate, and sweetmeats."

"I might tell of fire at sea," said the captain, "or wild adventure on the coast of Africa, when I was in the 'black ivory' trade and could have got one hundred blacks for one white woman."

"I could make your blood run cold, Mrs. Trevelyan," shouted the great mate, "all about being hemmed in by icebergs, or chased by sharks."

"Speak about the Manila ship," the boy said, "that had four hundred and fifty in the crew, carried a hundred and fifty pirates, prisoners, and a three-million-dollar cargo of gold, satins, musk, jewels, wines, and conserves."

"I can tell of St. Elmo's lights," said the Finn, "or of were-wolves among some wedding guests."

"Tell," the boy urged, "about when the pirates counted out five hundred and ninety-



nine guineas in half and whole pieces, all of Queen Anne's time, yet fresh and delightful to feel of."

"She wants to hear," asserted the mate, positively, "about a ship being ketched in the bottom of a whirling blow, in pitch dark, nothing left of creation but a hole of lightway up over us, the eye of the storm, we calls it, leering down to see how we takes it, or how to upset us."

"I want her to hear," said the boy, "about the three ships Dampier met, laden deep as they could swim with tons and tons of quince marmalade, that would have had eight hundred thousand gold pieces only they got wind of freebooters."

"I could make your face as long as a wet hammock, ma'am," cried the mate, "about a masked cap'n, and a lady made to walk the plank."

"Come, come," said the supercargo, "Mrs. Trevelyan is not to get nervous. Let us tell her our own story. You begin it, captain."

"That'll ease off a point or so for each man," thundered the mate, "a five-stranded, left-handed twister!"

The captain began: "The Jolly Polly was a tramp vessel, now smuggling opium, or



musks, then in the 'black ivory' line, another time carrying pirates' treasure. I need not say what cruise I was on when we sighted a ship we had several times heard of from vessels spoken. They reported her as 'acting strangely.' She carried a distress-signal, the reversed ensign, and colors that cried 'To Speak,' yet she was said to run away from any attempt to reach her. When we saw her she carried fore-sail, lower top-sail, spanker and main-sail set; everything else was in confusion, as if dropped suddenly. She was painted blue, with a fine red and gold line her length, and a red, blue and gold figure-head. The name on the stern read The Stormy Petrel. She seemed to wait for us, gently swaying, as if but a mermaid's fan in motion, she was so far and small to the naked eye. There was no gleam from polished brass and glass as she moved; all looked dingy. As we came up there was no answer to our cries. Nobody showing on deck to watch the coming of the boat I sent, I had curiosity enough to set off myself in a second boat. There was no one on board the Petrel. We could find no trace of hurt; she had not struck a reef or been run into; stern, sternpost, and rudder were all right. Seamen's chests and some of



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their clothes left about were dry. They had not met very heavy weather. A little bottle of vanilla on the cook's table had not been upset; the pitch in the water-ways had not started; hull, masts, and yards were perfect; there was not a crack in the grimed paint of the deck-house. The deck was smeared everywhere with old stains of blood. It was flush-decked; you looked from the taffrail along a platform whose length was broken only by skylights, the forward windlass, and once by the galley long-boat, but that and all the boats were gone. The cabin was large, panelled in pale blue and red and gold, and light with a big stern window. There was a woman's long black cloak here, a lace handkerchief and carved ivory fan there. A table under the lamp bore books and papers. A woman's diary, made of loose sheets, had dates of months after the last entry in the log, but now weeks old. It was merely bits about the weather and her being all alone. There was a piece of poetry in the same writing on a sheet of paper fallen to the floor, where there was also a small square of paper, folded once, with the word '*Act!*' on it, in a man's writing. The captain's chronometer, sextant, and charts were gone. No bills of lading, no manifest,



were found. The cargo had been taken away, but small wedges of gold were scattered about, proving it had been a treasure ship. Why it had been deserted was a riddle we did not think we could ever solve, but in the hope of salvage-claim we took the Petrel in tow.

“Some days later we all heard, one dark night, the whistling of a Russian air, but could not tell where it came from. The crew thought the Petrel might be haunted; but I was sure the sound came from another side, and long hung over the starboard rail listening. It came and went, a fine, loud whistling of a beautiful old tune, slowly louder and louder, till the man in the forecastle cried:

“‘It’s right off the bow, sir; but I don’t see anything.’

“Again and again it rose and fell, with a hopeless sadness in it that curdled my blood. I ordered the Polly stopped and had rockets sent up. At last these showed a little boat drifting close by, with a boy sitting in it and whistling, whistling, with no sign of seeing or hearing us. I had a boat lowered for a mate and some rowers, and had port-fires burning to show them how to find the boy and come back to us. When the boy was hoisted on board he cried:



“‘The cap’n and the second mate! Why have n’t I come across ’em?’”

“He was dazed and could hardly be made to eat and drink what was brought him, and soon fell into the dead sleep of exhaustion. To all our questions his only reply was once to exclaim:

“‘Oh! I was so afraid of drifting ashore and finding Chocolate Charley and his gang!’”

The captain rose, and saying “Allow me,” carried a light from the mantelpiece to a table. It was the third time he had moved the lamps; he had them now near windows. I concluded that his nerves took whims.

“I wish I had n’t! cried the boy. “I wish I had’nt! But how could I know? And I was so afeard! It was blessed hard on *me*, too! When I see the Jolly Polly I thought it was only one of my dreams till I see it was tugging another one that lurches and peeps from behind just as if on the lookout for me, but trying not to have me find out it was the Stormy Petrel. I was in one of my queer spells. I could n’t help myself. I let ’em take me on board. When they all crowds round, asking this and that, at first I says:

“‘I don’t know about that ship.’”



“But I used to sit and stare at it so that Cap’n Volokhoff says at last:

“‘You do know about the Petrel; I see it in your face.’

“‘Where is the lady?’ says I, for I was most dead with wanting to know.

“‘There was nobody on the Petrel when we found it,’ says he.

“My heart was full; I couldn’t see. I burst out crying, and cried a good while, for all I had left her there alone. She was so kind, and pretty enough for a figure-head, and I liked her so much till the last, and then I was only afeard. When they sets us adrift in the Petrel we knowed it was going to be all chance with us, but we tries to cheer each other up.

“She says: ‘We must meet some vessel.’

“‘We’ve got lots to eat,’ says I.

“‘We are safer here than on some island,’ says she.

“I says: ‘We’ve got rid of Black Bill’s blue mug and his boosy set.’

“I tells her fine pirate-stories, only she’d laugh when I did n’t see anything funny. She tells me of grand doings at court; soldiers there with big diamonds in their epaulets and sword-hilts; ladies in dresses of lace ‘like a spider’s web,’ says she, ‘and worth as much as rubies



and diamonds.' She 'd been to a great ball the night she come to the ship.

" 'I had not gone home,' says she, 'when I was forced to hurry to the wharf. I had to pay the driver of a *droski* with my lace overdress. It was a fortune for him.'

" Her handsome yellow satin she wears caught up all round over her lace-trimmed skirts, rather tumbled and soiled now. She hides it all under her long cloak, only on deck, when it blowed chilly, she has to wear my pea-jacket and the bo'sun's sou'wester; though that couldn't hide the fine lady. She was good company then. She tells me about seeing nine bushels of pearls at the Troitsa monastery, just left over from embroidery. She 'd been to feasts where she had real caravan tea, the ten-dollars-a-pound kind, not hurt by sea-voyaging; and oysters and grapes and watermelon, brandied cherries and sugar-glazed filberts!

" We tried to forget where we was, for we couldn't bear to stay on deck, on account of the splashes of blood, nor in the cabin—it was too lonesome. It was hard to take in that we two was there alone, after all we 'd known going on up and down.

" 'We are going to meet the Portuguese



carrack that never come home,' says I, 'with a castellated stern rising into a tower from her poop and pooproyal, and in her hold thousands of pounds' worth of gold and silver bars, ingots, doubloons and ducats, gems, and minted money. That's the ship you ought to be on!'

"'It does sound like 'my ship',' says she.

"The time come when we didn't say much. We watches for days a smooth swell, most too lazy to go by us, and the slow sway across the deck of the shadow of the mizzen-mast, like a lullaby, listens to the straining of bulk-heads, clicking of doors loosely hooked, and the flapping of the canvas, till we feels we might as well be dead and under hatches. Then a breeze would send us skimming like the gulls slanting against the wind or hanging in the air round us, for the lady makes me scatter feed on deck for 'em. When we'd feel the stir and rush we'd cheer up and watch the snow of foam behind us and see things in it, same as you can looking in the fire. She see flower-wreaths, hearts, and stars mostly, but I could make out fortress and cannon and smoke of battle. Dear heart! how afeard she was of a stiff blow, when the rigging screamed and the mast-heads leaned over,



and we has to steady ourselves by rail or be-laying-pin. Once or twice in many weeks we see ships creep out and in the haze on the horizon. I hoists the colors 'To Speak' and a brand new white ensign I finds in the color-chest.

"'To show 'em we ain't pirates,' I says. 'When they ketches sight of that the first mate with a telescope will run up on the main-royal yard, the second mate with a telescope will climb up on the fore-royal yard, and the cap'n will be trumpeting: 'Ahoy!'"

"She laughs and says: 'Think of their surprise to find, after all that hurrah, only a woman and a boy.'"

"But the vessels we see gets swallowed in fog or we did. And the Portuguese carrack, too! After we'd been hurried along for days by short winds, or stopped as if anchored for weeks, she gets downhearted. I knowed by her eyes that she cries a good deal, but she never let me see her doing of it. She knowed it was dirty luck for me, too. She asks me about my folks and makes me tell her things she could say to 'em in case she ever got home and I never did. I wants to do the same for her, but she says:

"'It is better for you yourself that you



should not name me. There is only one I want to reach. I don't know where.'

"One day I see her leaning over the bulwark rail and goes up to her. She was looking where the ensign shadowed a white streak under the stern that made me think of a burial at sea and the body sinking.

" 'Haul it down!' she says, with a shiver. 'It is too like a shroud!'

"So I does, but I hated to lose such a big signal. Then she takes spells of walking, walking, walking sometimes all night above and below, all over the ship; though, while she was in her right mind, she was shy of the bloody deck. I put off and put off trying to clean it up; it turned my stomach to think of it. After a while she wouldn't eat nor talk, but sits all the time writing, writing. I got afeard of her big, wild eyes and crazy ways, and when I see a branch with green leaves on the water, I says to myself:

" 'We can't be far from some island; I'll risk it!' I'd always been fond of sitting in the cap'n's gig to watch the foam and spray about the rudder when we gets a breeze, and she didn't mind my going there now. Little by little, I lays in provisions, and one night when she was standing behind the interlacing



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of the main shrouds, looking ahead, I sets to work and slowly, one end at a time, gets the gig lowered. Right you are! The night was mild, the lady had no wrap, her hair was dressed very fine, and she was a-letting down her long train. The next minute I knowed she'd be a-pacing to and fro, a-singing a polonaise, and a-playing she was at the ball. I seen her do it lots of times. Over and over I'd put off going, and maybe I'd stayed this time if she had n't set up her forlorn piping. A polonaise is just a high swagger of a march, no more dance of the hornpipe sort than standing still is, and when the music is sad, like the 'Oginski,' it is all sobs and a catching of the breath. So I drops gently after the gig, and lets the ship move off with naked davits and hanging tackle. I hates to lose the Petrel; as I looks up at it the spars was tossing against the moon as if it knowed, from flying jib-boom end to the taffrail, the whole yarn, and was uneasy as I was. I was sorry right off when I could n't get back. A wind rose and carried me away. I lost sight of the ship and found no island. I felt it serves me right for deserting the poor lady. Some nights, when the sky was a mass of stars, there was liberty and brightness of morning, but the others!



Folks on shore don't know what the dark means; at sea it is thick black, like velvet. Sometimes all the top of the water would flicker and gleam, as if thinking about me or trying to tell me something. One black night there comes up a wet squall, and the lightning looks to be slanting right after me. I was too scared to do anything at night, but on a calm day, though I didn't know what way to go, I used to row and row till I was dead tired and didn't care what come. I was lonesome for the lady, and I missed the noise of big sails beating the masts. I knowed no vessel would sight me, for often a haze shut the horizon in to within a few yards, and in clear weather my boat on the big blue made about as much show as a bird. I found I'd only divided a clove hitch, the lady and I had each now one to ourselves. So I goes on, day after day, night after night, never knowed when some big monster might knock my boat over and drag me down, and soon I had nothing left to eat. One night the full moon hangs like a big gold-piece in the sky, and I could seem to hear the lady singing the Ukrainian love-song, 'The Moon.' I could n't bear to hear her—it was sweet, but just like storm-clouds coming up, it made me want to cry—yet the time had



come when I begins to whistle it for company every night. I got forgetful spells, when I didn't know how I come to be there alone, and, by the powers! each day and night seemed a year long. It was a rum start to find the Jolly Polly had got me, but the queerest of all was when the lookout soon after sighted an island, so far away, shining and sparkling, and the water pounding so white on the reef I thinks of a bit of green glass dropped in snow. The air was so clear, like looking through a telescope, we see a man come to the shore long afore we gets nigh. The sun was like a ball of fire sinking into an ocean as of blood; there was a red glare on the whitening breakers, on clouds of sea-birds, on the dazzle of green and white, and on that figure standing on the beach, as if he'd sent for us, the man the crew of the Petrel thought had danger in him, they says:

“ ‘He and his shadow is the worst cards in the pack!’

“It was calm as if he had been tying up the winds in knots of his handkerchief. Here was the Petrel coming right back where she'd been set adrift, and there stood, by the men's yarns, a Finn who could sail a ship in contrary winds.



“‘The Knave of Spades,’ they calls him, ‘and his shadow, the Nine Spot?’

“There was a little imp standing beside him, no bigger than a sprit-sail knot, and I says to myself:

“‘That’s the Ace!’

Here the restless boy left the room, running to the front door and back. I thought he feared the Finn might not like his words; still he had been dodging out and in all the evening.

“When I see two ships driving tandem,” said the sailor, “and as they draws near makes out that the hind one is the Petrel, I was struck all of a heap.

“‘Shiver my timbers!’ says I to the monkey. ‘If it ain’t the whole blessed ship, from cross-trees to kelson!’

“And the monkey takes off *his* cap and scratches *his* head and smooths *his* chin, and tries, too, to think it all out.

“I see the boy on deck of the Polly, but no sign of the lady. They sends a boat off for me, and when I climbs aboard the vessel, here is Ivan ready to square off at me.

“‘Do you know each other?’ says the captain.

“‘It’s the Knave of Spades! He has got



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us back,' cries the boy. 'The Petrel was here and he cut the hawser.'

"'What could you see in the darkness?' says I. 'It was Chocolate Charley, 'cause he suspects I wants to get aboard and leave 'em.'

"'Where is he? Where are they all?' says Ivan.

"'Gone to the bottom or come out t' other side of the world!' says I. 'Black Bill give me a mauling, and they clears out when I knowed nothing. Where's the lady?'

"'Gone,' says he, and turns his back.

"The Petrel had a fiery set of Malays, Portuguese, Chileans, and a lot of half-breeds. Some of 'em had been ugly and put in irons; that cripples us by want of hands, and a big blow drives us leagues and leagues out of our course. They lays it all to the Finn. One dark night I was at the wheel, but I knows what's going on, that the first mate, who was on watch, is being gagged and bound. It wa'n't no use for me to try to stop it.

"Black Bill, one of the Malays, says to me: 'Old Jack of Spades, just keep off! You might have put one of your spells on 'em and saved us this trouble. But we'll keep you to whistle up winds for us.'

"Chocolate Charley, a quadroon, and



Gentleman George, a Portuguese, who might have been an earl, he was so high and mighty and lazy, gets the cap'n and second mate on deck by some trick, and then has four men seize each one.

“ ‘Now,’ they says, ‘we’ve taken the ship! You’ve got to agree to navigate her where we say, or we’ll cast you adrift.’ ”

“ The cap’n was pluck clear through. He swears blue streaks and thunders out: ‘I scorn to even answer you!’ ”

“ The mate loves a fight, and he sets to and trips up two of the men holding him, and punches another on the head and doubles up the fourth by a dig in the ribs. ”

“ ‘Look out for squalls, cap’n!’ he says. ‘I’ll attend to *your* men now.’ And he steers for ’em. ”

“ There was an orderly set on board, too; they gets at the arms-chest, as well as the others, and comes a-running up and takes sides agin Chocolate Charley and his men, and so here was as pretty a fight as ever you see, bang of pistol and clash of cutlass in a pitched battle right off and the deck running blood. ”

“ ‘You ought to have sanded the deck first, man-of-war fashion,’ I sung out. ”



“ ‘You mind your wheel!’ hollers Bill.  
‘We’ll sand the deck with bodies!’

“ There was a good deal of dull thumping of the deck, and many goes overboard without a boat and with a stiff air of thinking they could walk the water, or not caring whether land or water waits for their feet. The first mate was one of these,—died where he was gagged and bound, maybe from fright at being helpless. There was few left of the good men and true sort, and they was mostly the scared ones who never shows fight. The launch was lowered, the cap’n and second mate forced to go over into it by pistols held at their heads. The cap’n was fond of his ship, let alone the disgrace of losing a treasure-cargo, and as the Petrel sheers off his last look at us was pitiful. I knowed he was steering near the wind; they’d killed him as much as if they’d shot him. He was speechless, but the mate yells and yells back till the ship lost hail of him, telling the leaders of the mutiny what blasted fools they was, for none of ’em could navigate. The first thing was to help themselves from the ship’s stores, and they drinks all hands quiet for a spell. The poor lady had heard the row and locks herself up and tells through the door anybody that comes that she is ill.



She was such a frail wax-doll they cares nothing for her more than for a foam-wreath. They tears and yells and sings till they drops. When they sobers up, they has a long talk and decides to land at some island and bury the treasure to lose its link with the ship.

“ ‘There was a stiff blow last night,’ says Chocolate Charley to me, ‘and we knows who called it up, you Jack of Spades, and we’re not going to risk our cargo with *you*. Just you find a desert island now, if you values your life!’

“ ‘I knows more about setting a course than they thinks, so I steers in a certain direction, though it was many days afore we sights an island; and Chocolate Charley was suspicious, and used to stand and glare at me and want to curse, but hardly dare, ’cause they was afeard of the Finn’s power for bedevilment. And I don’t know but some of ’em thought I conjured up the island we finds. It did look like a vision, with its coral-grit like drifts of snow heaped on the dark blue water, its tall spikes of grass, its clumps of cocoanut-trees with tufted heads, its glaring green, and its birds of gold and red and blue. We could n’t get very near, and the treasure has to be carried ashore by boat-loads, and some of it gets swamped in



the surf. I'll not deny I was looking at it, hoping it might. It took several days. The rest of us men goes ashore, too; the scary ones had to help.

"I finds out, one afternoon, why supplies was taken off the vessel, too. Chocolate Charley was the only one for burying the treasure; Black Bill was for building a big raft, to get picked up with it at sea, and no proof it was a steal nor trouble of coming back to dig it up, and nobody else finds it. I overhears Gentleman George mutter:

"'If we leave it here, we'd better bury the Finn with it to leave him on guard.'

"'If you do,' says I, 'by the powers! remember me when the next storm rises, that's all!'

"At dusk I steals down to the water's edge and waits for the steady ones, meaning for us to get back to the ship on the sly and get off with the lady and cabin-boy left on board. I could navigate well enough. There was such a thunder of big rollers I hears nobody behind me. The first I knows I gets flung up the beach. Chocolate Charley was sawing away on the hawser with his sea-gully. He had a sheet in the wind's eye, and never thinks how taut the Petrel was pulling. When the haw-



ser snaps, it jerks him into the surf. The vessel starts off in a hurry. I see the lady in the big stern-window, a light behind her. She springs to her feet. The boy shows dimly, hanging over the bulwark rail; I hears his faint cry for 'Alexis!' for we gets on well together. Chocolate Charley, carried by the tide, goes plunging after, as if in chase, and he never comes back. The scary ones didn't get round. Black Bill and Gentleman George come running down, thinks I cast Chocolate Charley into the water, and falls upon me; Gentleman George, too lazy to do more than hold me, while Black Bill give me such a drubbing I knowed nothing for days.

"When I comes to myself there was no noise but the beating of the surf on the reef. It was broad day. There was this little man," patting the monkey, "stands by me and looks anxious.

"When he finds that I see him, he offers his paw, as much as to say:

"'Let me know if I can do anything.'

"I was too weak for a while to stir. When I could sit up I see all the litter of raft-building. They must have shanghaied the timid men for the sake of having their help. They had left pork and rum and biscuit, 'cause they was



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afear'd of me. I had been simply marooned. It wa' n't likely there was any *cache*, though I hunts some, but finds no sign. The company of the monkey was worth more than the treasure there. Poor little castaway, he must have been some wrecked sailor's pet, for monkeys are not found on those islands, and I never heerd of one that had evoluted into being born with a little cap, which he has on when I first see him. He was fine company, not to talk, but a deep thinker; he used to sit by me watching the sea for a sail, and look dreadfully old and wise—seemed to know the most of the two of us. He would climb a tree and throw cocoanuts down, and take care not to hit me, and watch me fish, as if he felt himself above such silly trifling away of time, always staying by me, unless he sees I means to shoot a bird; then he runs into the woods till the noise is over. Sometimes he would study hard over a tattoo-mark on my wrist and arm; it was plain he thought it ought to run up to my shoulder; he would push up my sleeve and puzzle over the matter and look up in my face. So I made out that his master must have had the long tattoo he was remembering. When I first see the Jolly Polly stav-ing along with the Petrel behind, I says to



him: 'By thunder!' And he claps *his* paw on *his* knee, as if the sight was just what surprised *him*. When the Jolly Polly takes us aboard he acts all at home, and sits up in the rigging as if he was hired for the lookout. The boy and I couldn't talk much about the lady. We didn't think to see anybody belonging to the Petrel, but as we goes into Honolulu I grabs Ivan's arm, and says I:

"'Did you ever lay eyes on that man afore? Over there, at the top of the landing-stairs. See him stare at us!'

"'Lord!' says the boy.

"But we never run afoul of Black Bill and Gentleman George, and you may lay to that. As soon as I stands up again on that there island I spends the same hour every night thinking of 'em and their raft, and dancing three steps to the right, three steps to the left, and three turns with my arms raised to the full moon, and whistling, whistling, whistling. You get great help in such things from doing of it in a lonely place; you needn't think your wish with such heavy under-lines, so to speak; mine took to 'em like pitch.

"*'There was a shipshape gale come up that no raft could live in!'*"



The sailor's little wizard-chum gave him a pat on the head, as if in high approval.

“Who the lady was or where she come from, nobody on the *Petrel* knew,” the big mate's rumbling voice began: “If she'd waited till daylight the police or custom-house officers would have ketched her. It was along in the third watch she come gliding down the wharf like a black shadow. As she sweeps along the deck we see right off she was *A1*, fore, main, and mizzen. Under her long, black cloak there was the edge of a primrose satin ball-dress. She seems sort of wild to find some one she expects to meet, and begs the cap'n to wait—wait—wait! But he sees she was a way-up lady and was afeard of trouble. She didn't tell who was to come, only says ‘Wait!’ Our supercargo was a stranger, who didn't come nor send word. The cap'n scented some police business; so off we goes, hand over hand, right on time. The cap'n give her the cabin the supercargo would have had, and the officials overhauling us afore we starts didn't notice there was any door where the cap'n slid the big screen he kept for scary times. When we gets fairly off up she comes on deck. She had all us officers taut in tow, first look—she was a dainty duff, with lots of



plums, but she didn't see anybody there. She just cries and wrings her hands and holds her arms towards the last of the Russian shore. It is queerly level to what this coast is, so flat, so low, just a pencil-line between sea and sky, the slope of the water often hiding the land, the lighthouse towers looks like sails.

“‘Oh! for your wings to go back—to go back!’ she cries to the gulls.

“The captain tries to calm her, and gets her to go below agin, and there she stays for weeks. She'd only just come on deck, biting lemons all day, when we had the mutiny. There was great wonder about our missing supercargo, and through that it at last got told about among the crew that the Petrel was a treasure-ship. We did have, but didn't mean to have all hands know, six hundred thousand pounds in gold from the big Golenski mines, even where it was consigned kept secret, so far, by the captain and first mate. We had weeks of fog and days of gale, and that tremendous blow, after some of the ugly men had been put in irons, sends us far off our track, and the Petrel was a lost bird till she could have all hands at work.

“I never sailed along of a harder set; I knowed Chocolate Charley, Black Bill, and



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Gentleman George was ripe for the gallows, but I didn't think they'd break out this trip till I found them athwart my hawse. It was a lovely fight after I sails slap in. Blows and kicks and cries and stamp and rush of feet, and roar of shots and cutlasses clashing, and the deck slippery with gore! Lord love ye! it was fun! Never got so thirsty in my life! Pity the leaders got drowned, I'd have liked to dangle 'em, a pretty row of 'em, from a yard-arm! If all the steady men on board had been decent and loved fighting as I do, as a baby loves sweets, we could have got Black Bill and his gang into irons. And when that mess of swabs cast the cap'n and me loose, I was swearing mad, 'cause I knowed we could have got the best of 'em, if there'd been enough spunk on board. When the cap'n see his pet ship going off with this here precious cargo right afore his blessed dead-lights and knows the cruise is bungled for good and all, he jumps overboard. All his plans about ship and treasure, all his concern in life amounts to a few bubbles floating by me! I must have been within half a plank of death, tossing in that there boat nigh upon a month. I got out of provisions; the soft-headed lubbers flung only a little stock on board; it's a wonder the



likes of 'em done so much. I turned light-headed, and when I hove in sight of the Black Gull I knowed nothing of it; but they sees and sends a boat. I was for fighting when they sheers alongside, and they has to seize me. I was sick for weeks after they left me at Honolulu. When I gets outdoors I goes to the landing-stairs and sits in the sun with other salts stranded there, to do my share of jawing about rot'ry storms and pirates.

“There was a Russian not long from China and Japan that I had some talk with; but I never thinks, by a long sea-mile, that he knowed anything about the Petrel, till the Jolly Polly come a-towing of her round the bight. When I gets a bit over my own setback by it, I sees a sudden change in this man's face, a whiteness, a set holding of himself together, as if some shock was a-threatening to knock him to pieces.

“‘Do you know either of the ships?’ says I.

“He looks at me as though he did n't know what I says; and it was plain he could n't speak.”

The mate took the sailor's cards into his ragged fingers with livid patches of nails and set himself to playing *solitaire*, keeping his air



of bluster toward the game, and fierce, even in his silence.

“The day before I was to leave St. Petersburg,” said Stroganoff, “as supercargo on the Stormy Petrel, a note came inviting me to the theatre, signed by an unknown name. Locking my door and lowering my window-shades, I dipped a glass-brush in a corrosive liquid and wet the paper. The common ink vanished. The page turned blank. Then, like a flock of wild geese trooping across a pale autumn sky, letters in another handwriting rushed into sight. Here was a notice to appear that night at an ‘illegal’ tea-party to be given by our ‘Circle’ at the house of Vassily Botcharov, late ataman or leader in a military affair which had failed. This was to talk of and guess at the unknown fate of some members of our Circle who had been lost by the late failure, doubtless carried off secretly. I was about to give up this life of constant dread. I would not have gone to Vassily’s but for the hope of persuading my friend Féodor Bolchakoff and his betrothed, Nadia Hilkoff, to also leave the country. They had become too well known as at least ‘sympathizers’ with the Circle. Féodor was still a ‘legal’ man, living under his own name, with a genuine passport, but we



knew he had been lately watched. He had 'tarnished' his rooms by letting a refugee stay there. Nadia was an aristocratic convert to our Circle, had inherited money, and, to divert suspicion, still wore clothing too costly and elegant for one of her views. She looked very beautiful that evening when we three mingled with the dancers at a ball in the Taurida Palace; her dress was of point-lace, over primrose satin; bouquets were held on shoulder and skirt by clusters of diamonds, and there was a string of pearls in her hair. Féodor was as fine-looking as she."

The Finn, leaning toward me with his eyes intently upon me, pointed to Stroganoff. I had a vision of this handsome man, not in his fur pelisse, but dressed as a military officer, gold embroidery on his uniform, diamonds on his heavy gold epaulets, buckle, sword-hilt and scabbard, stepping through the stately polonaise, with the beauty, in the famous half-mile of ball-room and conservatory with twenty thousand wax-lights on pillars, on plants, tracing border of friezes and outlining arches.

"Petroff, one of the intermediate class who aid secretly and know movements and addresses of the Circle and its friends, said in my ear, as he passed in a dance:



“ ‘The wolves are out to-night.’

“ ‘This need not mean that they would visit Vassily. In a waltz Nadia whispered:

“ ‘I met Dudorov Katchenski.’

“ ‘Where?’ I asked anxiously; he was one of our ‘disappeared.’

“ ‘On the Nevskoi Prospect. Swiftly as my carriage passed, he yet made the sign not to speak to him.’

“ ‘We could not leave the ball too long before others.’”

The vision fled. Stroganoff wore his pelisse and sat before me. The Finn sank back, drawing the long breath of exhaustion.

“ ‘Hours after midnight are especially dangerous, yet Vassily’s safety-signal in his window awaited our coming. Nothing had been learned of other vanished members.

“ ‘There was still to be ‘removed’ the official of the Fortress, who had lately escaped the Circle. Such officers know our unbroken law, not to follow if they take themselves off; but he boldly stayed, and we had letters from the prisoners complaining of fresh cruelties from him. To decide who should move as our avenging hand, Vassily wrote ‘*Act!*’ on a slip of paper, folded and placed it, with many looking like it, in a Chinese jar, stirred them as if



a careful brew of poison, and offered the bowl to each of us. No sign was made as to which one had drawn the word. I feared Nadia's heightened color betrayed her as its owner. I felt sure she had it when she gave all her jewels to Tchartkoff, an old gray-beard who had just been to Paris to sell such contributions to the Cause and was going again. I urged her and Féodor to leave on the Petrel; but, as we say, the mind muddled the reason; they would not hear of it.

"Tchartkoff startled all by flinging a big bomb among us. It exploded from the fall into a thousand bits of candy—a French device.

"'Is it ready?' he asked; for names of persons or things are left out of the Circle.

"'I have to fit the touch-holes, that is all,' said Vassily. His wary ear caught some sound, which made him snatch the candle from the window, just as Petroff tore up the stairs and burst, breathless, into the room, crying:

"'Save yourselves! The police!'

"I managed to murmur to Féodor and Nadia: 'Come to the ship if you can get there,' and then we had fled by different ways.

"I doubled and turned through our secret roads, passing across gardens, and even through houses, but as soon as I stepped into a



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main street I was stopped, and twenty-four hours later was on my way to Siberia. None of our Circle were in my gang of prisoners. There was no way to learn whether they were in some other lot or were not caught. To ask would bring them into danger they might have eluded. So with torture about them for my close companion, I crossed that awful desert where villages show like mustard-seeds, scattered so far in the white waste. To escape would be only to die by hunger or by wolves. Even the few trees hold their branches in gestures of fear and despair, softened only by powder and filigree of snow from a low sky of unbroken gray. The Great Post Road was punishment enough. I was saved from work in the Nerchinsk mines. I met in Siberia a high official, who, on account of old family obligations, secretly helped me to join, in disguise, a tea-caravan returning to China. Another journey of week after week,—that long land route to Shanghai, by sleigh through Siberia, camel through Tartary, boat and mule through China; but now a sense of freedom gave me strength.

“Uncertain what to do, weary in mind and body, I wandered to Nagasaki, and then to Honolulu, where I lingered, not knowing that



I waited to see, with amazement, the arrival of the Petrel, to hear the story of the captain of the Polly, and to walk up on his left and say:

“‘I was the supercargo of that ship.’

“I steps up on the cap’n’s right,” said the gruff Dmitrivitch, “and I says to him, says I: “‘I was the second mate.’”

Furious with himself about his game, he sat glowering at the cards.

Stroganoff had gone to the piano, and was softly playing.

“Then,” said the captain, “I sold the Jolly Polly and the chance of salvage-claim for the Stormy Petrel. We all had a touch of cholera, and there was not much left of us when we reached San Francisco.”

“Thank you,” I said. “How I wish I could have seen what the lady had written!”

The captain drew from his pocket a folded paper, yellow with age and blue with damp, opened it and read to me an appeal from the poor lady to her lost lover. The undercurrent of Stroganoff’s music made it seem very touching.

“It has the stress of Mascagni’s *Intermez-  
!*” I cried. “And he never knew!”

“That is as it may be,” said Volokhoff.



"We cannot tie and unite knots in the thread of destiny," said Stroganoff.

"It leaves the story so incomplete," I said. "But that is real life. Or is it that our glimpse is uncertain?"

"Life is a bungled voyage anyhow," growled Dmitrivitch. "By the time you gets the hang of your sealed orders you're too nigh port to set your course different, and you're sure to wish you could."

He was in another fume over *solitaire*, glaring at cards and Ivan till the poor boy ran out.

"What a man is to know would be sure to reach him," said Volokhoff. "We have a story of a captain who put to sea without paying a debt contracted on a relic of the cross. A storm arose, which he calmed by throwing overboard a chest with the money, which floated safely to the claimant. He was to receive it; it could be sent recklessly."

"As we say," said Stroganoff, "what must be, must be."

"Now, she is dead," I said, sadly.

"What is being dead?" cried the Finn, with indifferent air, looking at me with pity through that veiled gaze of his onyx eyes, always looking in rather than out.

"If we only knew!" I cried.



“Creations of one kingdom, marine, animal, or vegetable,” said Volokhoff, “frequently imitate those of another. So the spiritual body is often born with a mockery of physical blindness and deafness.”

The Pole had glided into a strain by Chopin.

“You are the only one,” I said, “I ever heard interpret that angelic voice as I do. It is not grieving, but comforting.”

I brought him my rhymes about it.

#### FUNERAL MARCH.

*Chopin.*

Hear muffled throb of the heavy hearts, helpless and terrified.

Death, like a wind, blowing fragile web of their affairs aside,

Tore it and tattered and dashed it to earth, stunned, aghast, they chide:

Merged in the One? Or transfigured self? What and where is the dead?

Death is a sphinx, in vain Life has put ear to its lips and pled—

Blank desert space! And may be no more though All were to be read.

All of the body wants are met,  
How should the spirit famish yet?  
Its thoughts are dream and vision pearled,  
For its delight there lies unfurled



Transcendent beauty of the world,  
Though but pontoon to bear ye, hurled  
Above what dizzy deep on deep!  
Below illimitable steep!  
Through vastness ye in grandeur sweep:  
Yet fear and question, yearn and weep!  
The answers in your longings leap!

What know ye? Where Earth wheels in flight,  
Thrown by one of the shapes of might  
That weave the stars in web of light?  
What on the moon's far side is lain?  
Why tide of wind and sea complain?  
How thunder roars in rolling wane  
A burst of sobs through tears of rain?  
Why sap in weed or pine-tree vein  
Stirs, winding as to piper-strain?  
How one loam yieldeth balm and bane?  
Could *I* change when the mere plum-spray  
Engrafted on the peach may stay  
An individual branch? Nay, nay,  
That great law moveth not astray,  
I still am *I*, shall *be* alway!

And I then gone because unseen,  
Though not when wall might intervene?  
Yet, Nature warns, mark shrivel, cower,  
The clematis; the orchid dower  
Of hidden strength awaiting hour;  
The deathless resurrection-flower! \*

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\* South American. One which the writer's family has had nearly forty years, looks like a ball of brown evergreen, English-walnut size, but expands to a saucer-like lily whenever put in water.



Though wide the field of night and deep,  
The dark no sickle-moon may reap,  
The dawn-flushed clouds in radiance heap;  
Foreshadowings so round ye creep,  
But dull to miracle ye keep,  
For of the hints that hide and peep,  
How great is this: ye rise from sleep!

Hear leaden beat of the hapless hearts, sullen,  
rebellious, tried.  
None know the Truth's rapt exaltation, or who could  
here abide?  
Yet—Voice of tender vibration!—now this their  
thought as they glide:

The dragging worm in his cloak of fur knows not of  
overhead,  
He, too, must follow his kin, wrap himself in a dying  
bed—  
What beauty rises! What joy! On inaudible wings  
outspread!

He read it aloud. He and Volokhoff looked  
at each other and then at me.

They spoke together: "You are right, Mrs.  
Trevelyan."

Ivan came in, muttering: "*Sei tshas! Sei  
tshas!* (Directly, directly!)"

Dmitrivitch muttered back: "They'll have  
to belay that talk!"

Again that meaning glance ran round among  
them.



Volokhoff rose, saying: "Vladimir, son of Stroganoff, it is time."

The clumsy bulk of Dmitrivitch, in my room filled with frail treasures, made his "Stand by to go about!" as he rose, seem needful.

We had a last round of tea with a general "*Vosh durrivia!*" (Here's to you!)

"Mrs. Trevelyan, pardon our long stay," said Stroganoff, with that unseen motion that gives play to the pelisse, crosses, doubles, and clasps it around the body, which it swathes mummy-like.

"You are not likely to see us again," said Volokhoff.

"We shall not forget you," said Ivan.

Dmitirivich loomed over me in an effort to be gentle that was yet alarming. "Recollect," he said, "if your ship is ever in irons, on a lee shore, the Russians will come to the rescue."

"You will hear us spoken of to-morrow," said the captain.

"I am glad you came," said I; "I am sorry for exiles."

"That word is not used in Russia," said the supercargo. "We say—and please remember us as—'involuntary emigrants.'"

"Sometimes you gets in the midst of a hur-



ricane and your masts going over the side before you knows it," darkly hinted the big mate, "but don't *you* be afeard. Just think of yourself as safe right among

" 'Five betel-nut palms of Bombay.' "

"Think of the marooned," said the Finn.

I opened the doors; they passed out, bowing.

The boy gave me the comforting cry of the sea-watch: "All's well!"

The monkey, impressed by all this leave-taking, took off his tiny cap to me, but the lurch of the sailor's shoulder forced him to hastily put it on and clutch his master's collar.

They filed off into the darkness from whence they came.

The mate questioned: "*Na pravi?*" (to the right?) The captain ordered: "*Na leva!*" (to the left!) and away they went.

As their steps went down into Jones street their voices rose with true swinging deep-sea roll in other lines of that old, old chant spread from Breton fishermen to sailors of all countries:

"The north wind, the north wind,  
The north wind came on to blow."

Farther and farther, fainting away in the



mysterious night, like a salt breath of mid-ocean, or cries of sea-birds over the lonely deep, a concentration of the poetry and color of a calling filled with the sublime symbolism of air and sea.

So I lost my friends. I have never seen them since; but in nights of storm I have fancied I heard on gusts of wind their voices cheering me from afar with:

“We were two, we were three,  
We were three mariners.”

There was such a sense outdoors of the night being far gone that I drew in and locked the door, thinking “It must be too late now to visit that poor care-taker.” To decide I looked at the hall clock. It was past two!

I slept late next day, only roused at noon by long and loud knocking at the front and back door, even upon the windows. I hurried into a wrapper and opened the front door. Who were these urgent callers, with eager, anxious faces, exclaiming, as if relieved, “Here she is!” and “She is here!” and crowding upon my steps? Not only neighbors, but policemen and reporters and some of my friends from the Mission, Hayes Valley and Oakland!



They looked at me with an air of doubting that they really saw me.

"You are alive, then!" a reporter said, and two or three of my friends began to cry.

"Why not?" said I. "Why do you come like this?"

A policeman spoke: "The houses on each side of you were broken into last night and robbed, and the care-taker of the fine house was brutally murdered!"

"It was lucky for you," said a neighbor, "that you had a party."

"You are mistaken," I said.

"Well, your house was lighted in every window, up and down, back and front," said another.

Was this the reason of Ivan's running about?

"And we heard music!" said a third neighbor.

"Nothing else could have saved you," said a fourth; "lots of folks know about your valuable *curios*."

I could not believe my kindly pink-cheeked blondes were in league with those criminals. I explained nothing. The reporters went off in a huff. One of my friends took me home



with her. Others insisted upon coming to stay with me at night.

It was late in the afternoon when I left my friend, a sea-captain's wife living on Telegraph Hill. I came down Greenwich street and was looking over at the green and gray of the Russian Church, thinking of Pouchkine's St. Petersburg:

“Under a pale-green sky,  
Weariness, chill, and granite!”

when the Russian priest came up the steps at the corner of Washington Square.

“Mrs. Trevelyan!” he cried. “In a city of battle, murder, and sudden death, *you* are yet safe, thank Heaven!”

“Saved, too, by a call from some of your countrymen,” said I, and told the story.

“Stroganoff!” he cried, as if stunned, and made me repeat the tales told by the super-cargo and the boy.

He grew younger as he listened, with his eyes on fleecy clouds in the west. “Poor Nadia!” he murmured.

I had not yet told her name.

The long slope northward of Russian Hill rose sharp-edged with light from an amber sunset, but that was not the gleam I saw on his face.



The slope is like the graceful flank of a mastodon, and, with the house on the brink of Vallejo street, overhanging Taylor, reminded me of the children's drawing on a slate, where a house in the left upper corner has a path leading from and to it, undulating until it forms an animal, with the house for its head.

The Latin Quarter at this hour is like a deserted village; but one or two passers-by greeted the priest as "Bátiushka" (father). One old man, more intimate, said:

"Good evening, Féodor."

The story was complete, I thought. We went down into the Square to cross by the diagonal path.

"The lady's poem," he said with a sigh. "If I could only have read it!"

"I remember it," said I.

We sat on a bench near the giant willow, and I repeated the lines as if another voice spoke through me.

#### A CRY IN THE DARK.

O, if I *knew*, if *I* knew, *if* I knew!

Against flood-tide of grief and dread and smart

How prove my faithful love? by what sure art!

The Judgment Day I shall forget to rue



If it but bring us face to face, we two !  
Hear me ! though in abysmal broken heart :  
On pinnacle of joy upraised, apart ;  
Or here, unseen, the while I weep for you.

Who shall forbid my message ? It should leap  
The wreck of worlds, black chaos, touch with glow  
Cloud-drift of spirits in tumultuous flow,  
Your thought in sudden lift and splendor steep !  
I call to you from my soul's utmost deep,  
Now — *if* you know, if *you* know, if you *know* !

The priest's face shone; the kindling of an inner light had grown into radiance.

We left the Square, following Powell street, and turned up Vallejo, where Russian Hill seemed to rise to meet and listen to us, abruptly towering above us, dark, sinister even with its lanterns, like a ladder of light for several almost upright blocks. It took the part of a third person in our talk, one who knew most.

The dog-howl whistle of one of our men-of-war pierced the air. I thought of the erect bearing of Volokhoff and Stroganoff. "Is there a Russian man-of-war in port?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "nor any Russian vessel."

The hill loomed nearer, higher, the street-lights wavered, as if the wisest one of our trio



drew breath. We turned up Mason street, for I must skirt the steep hill.

“There are no strange Russian sailors here now.”

“Would you be sure to know?”

“Certain; they do nothing new without burning a taper before a saint in church.”

We crossed Broadway, and a few steps southward paused and looked back. I was to call here for my friends who were going to stay with me.

“Come to the church, to-morrow,” he said, “and I will give you a *molében*.

“What is that?”

“Prayer, chant, and the burning of incense; a service of thanksgiving to your guardian angel. You had a night-watch to keep you.”

Even in the dimness I could see that sudden look of youth still wrapping him like a mantle.

Aloft—over tightly packed roofs, rising high, crowding north and west above the Spanish church—the last street light of the great hill flared as if out of the sky. From our almost diagonal view across the block there looked no road to what seemed a friendly sign from hidden guard.

I asked what I had not before thought of: “Why do they call it Russian Hill?”



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“Oh! you have not been here long; you do not know!” he replied. His right hand was on his breast. I saw the third and little finger draw into the palm, in the Russian sign of the cross. “Years ago—before I fled from the Nerchinsk mines—they buried on that hill five unknown Russian sailors.”







A SWORN STATEMENT.







## A SWORN STATEMENT.

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*Being the Deposition of Mr. Audenried's Valet.*

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This ae night, this ae night,  
Every night and alle,  
Fire and sleet and candle-light,  
And Christ receive thy saule.  
—*Lykewake Dirge.*

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I first met Mr. Audenried through his advertising for a valet. I liked his appearance, and engaged with him at a lower salary than one of my experience and ability will usually work for. He was then living in a furnished house on Rincon Hill, whence he could see the bay. He sat for hours looking at it and writing verses. He had money, but was neither young nor strong, and seldom went out. He had been very handsome, was still fine-looking, with eyes that glowed with a lurid, internal fire.

There was one other person in the house, a quiet lady, yet one to be noticed and remembered. I pride myself on my discretion. It was nothing to me how many "Coralies" or



“Camilles” existed. It was long before I alluded to her, though I met her in the upper hall, on the stairs, and sometimes found her in the room with my master and myself, or just outside the door, standing near, as if waiting for me to go. After a while, I got the notion that she did not like me, and it made it unpleasant. After long thinking it over, for I did not want to leave, I gave a month’s notice.

“Why is this, Wilkins?” says Mr. Audenried. “If it is a question of wages, stay on. I like your quiet ways,” says he. That is just what he says.

“To tell the truth, sir,” I says, “it’s not my pay—it’s the lady, sir.”

“What!” says he.

So then I told of her air of watchful dislike, and how I was not used to being spied upon, and that it was needless my recommendations could all show. He turned quite pale, so white that I thought Heaven forgive me if I’d made trouble between them, for she looked sad enough anyway. He did not speak for a long while.

Then he muttered to himself: “*This* man, too!”

He made me tell him all over again. Then,



after a pause, he says: "Find me another place, Wilkins, and help me move."

So I thought there was a quarrel. We did move from house to house, from street to street, from city to city, all through the State and to others near. Mr. Audenried never spoke of her, nor noticed her, but as soon as she came, as she always did come, he at once gave the order to start. He seemed to watch my face, and I fancied he knew in that way when she was about. I wondered what their story might be, and tried to make out from verses he wrote that time, but all I could get hold of were these:

## PROPHETIC.

Unto the garden's bloom close set  
Of lily, larkspur, violet,  
Sweet jasmine, rose, and mignonette  
More beauty lending,  
Fair Marguerite stands in the sun,  
Plucks leaves from daisy, one by one,  
While Faust, impatient, sees it done  
And waits the ending.

See! on the garden-wall behind,  
Their happy shadows plain defined,  
Bent heads and eager hand, outlined  
Like soft engraving;



And there athwart their fingers' pose  
A shape whose presence neither knows.  
Mephisto! 'T is his head that shows  
A cock's plume waving!

Sometimes we rested a few days or weeks, sometimes went on, day after day, without stopping, but she was my master's shadow; she followed us everywhere. I used to try and puzzle out what their secret was. If it had been love, it must now be hate, I told myself, seeing how they often met and passed without a word. He did not appear to even see her.

We had come back to San Francisco, and it was nearing Christmas-time when I was first seized with my queer spells. We had taken another furnished house, far out and high upon Washington street. I thought we had got rid of the woman; but coming home late one afternoon I found her in the window, while my master had been looking over his writing-desk. Before him lay withered flowers, a ribbon, a lady's glove, and a photograph with some look of this persistent woman, but younger and handsomer.

I felt uneasy. Mr. Audenried sat with head on his hand, lost in thought. When I spoke he did not hear nor notice me until I put the



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medicine he had sent for into the hand in his lap. Then he did not know it at first, though in giving the parcel I touched his hand. Something about him I could not describe kept me an instant motionless in that position.

A stupor came over me. The carved ivory hourglass we had filled with Arizona sand from before the Casa Grande, our bright, thick Moqui blanket on the lounge, our foreign fur rugs, our Japanese fans, bronzes, and china—the whole room came and went as to one who is sleepy yet tries to keep awake. Again and again it vanished, reappearing enlarged to twice, three times, its size. Then it was lost in a mist, from which rose a different scene.

The chandelier had changed to long lines of lights, the pictures to great mirrors, and arches with banners and streamers. Devices in evergreen showed that it was Christmae Eve. I was aware of a rush and whirl of dancers, waltz-music, flowers, gay colors, and the scent of a sandal-wood fan; but I saw plainly only one woman, young, gay, lovely, but with a faint likeness to some one I had seen who was older and wretched. I rubbed my eyes, and when I opened them at the sound of my master's voice, it was the room I knew, with all



its familiar objects, and he and I were there alone.

One day I met our quiet lady coming from Mr. Audenried's study, and found him there in a fainting-fit. As I was helping him across the hall to his bedroom I had the second of my odd attacks.

A dullness and vague fear troubled me. Our many-branched antlers, our lacquered-work and carved cabinets and great Chinese lantern, the stained-glass skylight, the big vase of pampas-grass, the open doors and windows, the sunny yard, with callas and geraniums in bloom, all wavered before me, went and came and vanished.

I saw a room with flowered chintz in curtains and furniture-covers, a glowing anthracite fire, and Christmas wreaths hanging in long windows looking on frost-bound garden and river. And the beautiful woman of the ball! Still young, but now unhappy, looking at me in despair. Both arms outstretched in an agony of entreaty, and tears rolling down her cheeks. Terribly distressed by her woe, I gave a cry of pity just as Mr. Audenried, gasping and falling on the bed, brought me back to him, to myself, and to his



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Putting away his things for the night I  
found these verses in a woman's writing:

## IN ABSENCE.

In my black night no moonshine nor star-glimmer  
On my long, weary path that leads Nowhere  
    I get no shimmer  
Of that great glory our day knew.  
I cannot think the world holds you;  
It is not ours, this Land of Vague Despair—  
    I scarce can breathe its air.

I am as one whom some sweet tune, down dropping,  
Has left half-stunned by silence like a blow;  
    Like one who, stopping  
In drifting desert sands, looks back  
Where sky slants down above his track,  
To mark the tufted palm whose outlines show  
    An oasis below;

Like one whom winter wind and rain are blinding,  
And storm-tossed billows bear from land away,  
    Who, no hope finding,  
Should yield himself to bitter fate.  
Can I do this! Ah, God! too late—  
Have I not felt thy dear, warm lips convey  
    Commands I must obey?

“Forget-me-not!” a kiss for every letter.

“Forget-me-not!” a kiss for every word.

    It could not better  
Have stamped itself upon my soul  
It passed beyond my own control.  
All thought, all circumstance are by it stirred,  
    Invisible, unheard.



Though, like Francesca, ever falling, falling  
Through dizzy space to endless depths afar,  
    Thy kiss recalling  
Would charm me to forget my woe;  
Of Heaven or Hell I should not know,  
Nor as I passed see any blazing star,  
    Nor mark its rhythmic jar.

If such remembrance only — moon-reflection  
On depths untried of my soul's unknown sea —  
    Mere recollection —  
Could hold me spellbound by its sway,  
What of your true kiss can I say?  
Ah! that is wholly speechless ecstasy, —  
    No words for that could be!

I thought it might be I had myself grown nervous about the quiet lady, to have these crazy fits after seeing her, and I dreaded to have her come again. But it was not my place to urge Mr. Audenried to move, and he seemed tired of changing.

One evening he had a severe attack of palpitation of the heart, and called me in great haste. I had been wondering what had put him in such a flutter, when that lady opened the door and glanced round the room as if she had forgotten something, but did not come in. Mr. Audenried was so ill that he had to sit up in bed and have me hold him firmly, my hands pressing his breast and his back.



Again that strange dread and drowsiness fell on me like a cloud. My master's pearl combs, brushes, crystal jewel-box, with its glittering contents, and a bunch of violets in a wine-glass on the bureau, his Japanese quilted silk dressing-gown thrown over a chair, embroidered slippers here, gay smoking-cap there, and a large lithograph of Modjeska, glimmered through a fog, came back, withdrew again.

The one high gas-burner became a full moon, the walls fell away; I stood out of doors in a summer night's dimness and stillness that make one feel lonely; grass, daisies, and buttercups underfoot, and overhead stars and endless space. The beautiful woman, worn and wild-looking, with flashing eyes, stood there in a threatening posture, calling down curses! I shrank in horror, though the vision lasted, as before, not more than a quarter of a second.

Mr. Audenried, wasted and wan, had grown so nervous that after this time he refused to be left alone, and above all, cautioned me to stay beside him on Christmas Eve.

"An unpleasant anniversary to me," he says.

The doctor advised him to change to a hotel,



to have cheerful society. We moved to the Palace Hotel, and to divert his mind from its own horror Mr. Audenried gave a dinner-party in his rooms on Christmas Eve.

It was a wild night, just right for "Tam O'Shanter," which one of the gentlemen recited. The weather or my master's forced gayety made me gloomy. There was a raw Irish waiter to help, and once I went into the anteroom just in time to catch him about to season one of Mr. Audenried's private dishes from a bottle out of our Japanese cabinet. It was marked "Poison," but he could not read.

"What could possess you," I says, "to meddle with *that?*"

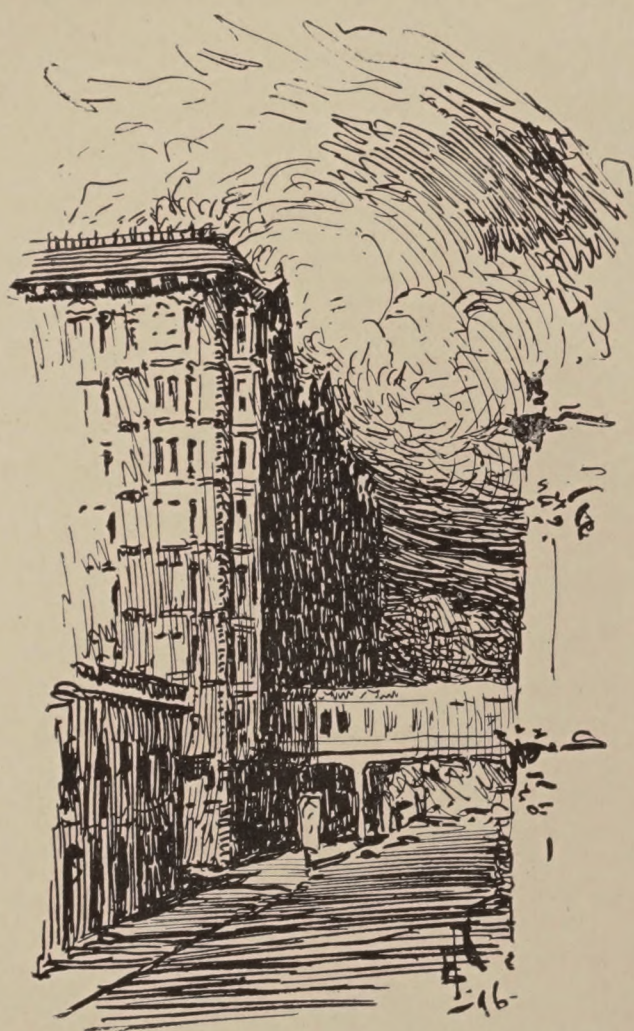
"Sure," he says, "the lady showed me which to take."

"The *lady!* What lady?" I says, trembling from head to foot.

"A dark lady," says he, "with a proud nose and mouth, and eyebrows in one long, heavy line."

I was horrified. I did not want to figure in a murder case. I liked Mr. Audenried too well to leave. I was too poor to lose a good place. I resolved to stay and protect him, but my heart beat faster. For my own safety I meant to say over the multiplication-table, and not











get bewitched or entranced again. I told myself over and over, "She shall not outwit me."

The wind and rain beat against the windows, and I heard one of our guests singing "The Midnight Revellers:"

"The first was shot by Carlist thieves  
Three years ago in Spain;  
The second was drowned in Alicante,  
While I alone remain.  
But friends I have, two glorious friends,  
Two braver could not be;  
And every night when midnight tolls  
They meet to laugh with me!"

As I took in some wine, a gentleman was saying: "Too wild a story for such a commonplace background as San Francisco."

"One must be either commonplace or sated with horrors to say that," says Mr. Audenried. "What city has more or stranger disappearances and assassinations? There have been murders and suicides at all the hotels. Other cities surpass it in age, but none in crime and mystery."

It was a lively party. A love-song from one of the gentlemen turned the talk on love affairs, and I went in just as Mr. Audenried was saying: "Aaron Burr relied wholly on



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the fascination of his touch. I believe in the magnetism of touch; that it cannot only impart disease but sensations. Holding a sleeper's hand while I read, by no will-power of mine he dreamed of scenes I saw in my mind."

Trained servant as I am, I disgraced myself then. I dropped and broke some of our own bubble-like glasses I was carrying. I was so unnerved by this explanation of my queer turns. It flashed upon me how they had only come when I was touching him. I had heard a former master, a learned German, talk about his countryman Mesmer, and I understood that what had appeared to me in my spells was what Mr. Audenried was thinking of!

I could scarcely recover myself for the rest of the company's stay. I recollect no more about it, except that somebody played the flute till it seemed as if a twilight breeze sighed for being pent in our four walls and longed to join its ruder brother-winds outside; and that Mr. Audenried read these verses of his:



## RONDEL.

To-night, O friends! we meet "Kriss Kringle";

He comes, he comes when falls betwixt us

The chiming midnight-bells' soft klingle,

When, glad, we crowd round cheery ingle,

Or, lonely, grieve that joy has missed us;

Or, in cathedral gloom, pray Christus;

Or drain gay toasts where glasses jingle.

Though marshalled hosts of cares have tricked us,

In wine's Red Sea drown all and single—

"Christmas!"

Drown recollection that afflicts us—

Our bowls, like witches' caldrons, mingle

Too much of old Yule-tide that kissed us—

The bitter drink that Life has mixed us

Forget, and shout till rafters tingle—

"Christmas!"

The last guest had hardly gone when Mrs. Carnavon's card was brought up. This was an elderly lady we had met in our travels, who took an interest in Mr. Audenried's case, though a stranger. She came in, bright and chatty, and my master was so cheered up by it that he readily let me leave.

I did not want to go. I had not been drinking; I was well and in my right mind, but my whole skin seemed to draw up with a shiver and thrill as at some near terror. But he sent me to a druggist to have Mrs. Carnavon's vinaigrette refilled.



As I left the passage to our suite of rooms and turned into the long, lonesome hall, more dreary than ever in its vastness at this quiet, late hour, I saw a little way ahead our brunette stepping into the elevator. I fancied a mocking smile on her face as she looked back at me. I forgot the multiplication-table, whose fixed rules were to keep me in my senses. For the first time it struck me that she was the woman of my visions, grown older and sadder.

I hurried, but when I reached the door she had gone, and stout Mrs. Lisgar was coming up, like the change of figures in a pantomime. She was another mystery of mine; for her maid had told me Mrs. Lisgar and my master knew each other abroad, but were sworn foes now, neither of us knew why.

"I beg your pardon, Madam," I says; "did you see the lady who just went down? A handsome brunette, with eyebrows that join above a Roman nose, and a very short upper lip. Where did she go?"

Mrs. Lisgar swelled bigger and redder. "Has Mr. Audenried sent you to annoy me?" she says.

"Certainly not, Madam," says I. "But I



saw her!—heavy, meeting eyebrows, scornful mouth, and—”

“Silence, sir!” she cried. “There was no one in the elevator. Don’t you know you are speaking of my poor sister, dead for many years?”

In my confusion I gasped out at random: “Mrs. Carnavon is here. Do you know her?”

Mrs. Lisgar says: “She was my sister’s most intimate friend. But you are either drunk or crazy. I was with her when she died in Arizona last week.”

An awful suspicion seized me; a cold sweat broke out on my brow. I had not lost sight of Mr. Audenried’s door. I bowed to Mrs. Lisgar and tried to hurry back, but a numbness in every limb weighed me down till I seemed to move as slowly as the bells that were striking twelve.

As I drew near, I heard angry voices inside, then a fearful groan, which seemed to die off in the distance. But I found every room in our suite vacant, except for my figure, which I caught glimpses of at every turn, staring out of the great mirrors, ghastly, haggard, with bloodshot eyes, and a strained look about the mouth, madly straying among the lights and



flowers, tables with remnants of the feast, and the disordered chairs, which after such a revel have a queer air of life of their own.

A long window in the parlor stood wide open. Chilled with fright, with I don't know what vague thought, I ran and looked out. Six stories from the street, nothing to be seen outside but the night and storm, neither on the lighted pavement far below, nor among drifting clouds overhead! Nothing but impenetrable darkness then and afterward over Mr. Audenried's fate.

This is all I can tell of the well-known strange disappearance of my unhappy master. It is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth



“THE SECOND CARD WINS.”







## “THE SECOND CARD WINS.”

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A house with two doors is difficult to guard.—*Spanish Proverb.*

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### I.—THE LOVELY MRS. CLARE SPEAKS.

I read people at a glance—always could; it was born in me, as it seems to have been born in my husband to dispute it; and I don't care what he says, I shall still think there was some strange secret between Mark Dillon and that woman. There was always something queer about him. I saw it at first, when Sam brought him to our rooms in the hotel and presented him to me as his “old friend from India, who joins us for the opera.” I thought it was shyness that kept him dumb, for he only bowed and stared.

“Oh, from India!” I cried, warmly, shaking hands; “the one I am to thank for the rare fan sent to Sam's wife! I am so glad to meet you.”

“*You* have it, then?” he said, looking closely at me.



He was plainly struck with Sam's taste in the choice of a wife. He never got over his surprise, but always watched me with a puzzled air, as he might look at a strange bird or flower, even turning to gaze after me.

"Yes, indeed, among my treasures," I said. "I was waiting for Sam to take me to the opera to-night. Here it lies with my India shawl."

I took it up, a gay bunch of bright feathers with a picture on one side, mounted on sandalwood and silver beaten by the patient toil of India into frostlike flowers and leaves, one spray even twisted round the red tassel.

"Now, do tell me the story," I begged. "You wrote in the note to Sam which came with it that it was enchanted. What did you mean?"

He looked startled. "I had nearly forgotten that," he said. "It was a spell cast by an old Hindoo whom I vexed by smiling at his tricks of magic."

"Has it worked?" I asked, lightly, as I drew on my long gloves while we waited for Sam, whose man is so slow in the last touches of his toilet.

Mr. Dillon looked uneasy. "In spite of my common sense," he said, "though I thought I



was above such delusions, I must confess that the spell is working. Where will it end?” he asked himself.

“Oh, how awful! What is it?” I asked, adding with a laugh, “I shall look at my lovely fan with a half fear of it.”

“Well,” he said, after a moment’s thought, “I will tell you, for it is not you who are to suffer. But, first, please tell me the date of your marriage.”

“Why—the fan was among my bridal gifts! Have you forgotten when you sent it?”

“Oh—yes,” he replied, with what seemed a painful effort of memory. “Well, this is its story: While I was at the Rajate of Puttiala, a rich and powerful baboo, Lall Chunder, asked his friends to come and see a great juggler show his tricks. Foreigners and natives all went, on elephants, camels, and horses. The baboo’s divan was in the centre of his courtyard. We sat round him, the natives smoking hookahs. There was a din of tumtum wallahs, and a troop of nautch-dancers. Then, to the sound of gongs and trumpets, came the sorcerer on a gayly decked elephant. He made gracious salaams to us, and, after sending paper birds and butterflies in long flights chosen by us, calling



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up from a far-off pack any card we named, and other slight tricks often shown, he had a fire made, into which he cast fragrant spices, and, while they burned, he put on a robe covered with strange signs; from a pocket in this he took a wooden ball full of holes where long thongs hung out. Grasping one of these, he flung the ball into the air with such force that it passed, unreeling as it went, at once out of our sight and stayed in the clouds. Then he made climb the thong a camel, which quickly vanished in the sky; a boy was sent after, making many trips, and bringing at each descent something for the baboo's guests. These gifts were left in a pile, while the boy was told to bring the rest on the camel. He went up, but the animal, now loaded, came down alone. The conjurer called three times; then, in a rage, snatched a knife and himself ran up the thong. We could see nothing, but heard his fierce threats and the boy's wild cries. He soon threw down one of the boy's hands, then a foot, then the other hand, the other foot, the trunk, and then the head. He ran down, panting, and with blood on his robe, laid the parts of the boy's body all in place, still raging at him, and gave them a kick, when the boy rose and bowed to us and



divided the gifts among us, who were in each case chosen by the magician, after making us pass singly behind the vapors of his mystic fire. With each thing he gave some warning. The natives, much excited, call on Brahma, Vishnu, Calle, and all the calendar of Indian gods; but the foreigners smiled at the fine jugglery, and I laughed out. The sorcerer looked at me long and gravely, and cast that fan to my lot. He came to me, spread it, and, showing me the picture on it, said: “I have put *you* there. That figure will go away when you leave the world. Though you send this fan straight as an arrow, it shall yet swerve from its course. When *her* hand holds it, will be when your sun sinks behind a golden mist!”

“But I don’t understand,” said I, “about the working of the spell.”

“Come, come,” said Sam, bustling in, “what *are* you talking about, Mark? You look too grave for opera bouffe,” and hurried us off.

During the evening I overheard Mr. Dillon ask Sam, “Why did you never write how matters stood?”

Sam took his opera-glass and looked over the house, and searched all his pockets for



cardamoms, before he answered, "Why should I?"

I knew at once what they must mean. Of course, Sam would prefer to have his wife seen to boasting of her beauty.

After we came home Sam asked how I liked his friend.

"What makes him seem so queer?" I said.

"How?" demanded Sam, bristling, as usual, for fear some one may have slighted me.

"What did he say?" he asked, anxiously.

"What was he telling you here?"

I told him, adding: "He seems so absorbed and odd."

But Sam, who, while I was telling him the story, was crazy enough to knock over my best cloisonné bowl and break a Dresden vase, only said: "Asked when we were married, did he? The infernal climate of India must have affected his brain."

So I ceased to wonder at Mark Dillon's odd ways, even at his looking troubled at seeing me carrying that fan, and really trying to have me change it for a carved cherry-stone bracelet he brought from China. I did not mind his losing himself in thought when near us, or watching me, as if I puzzled him. Sam had explained it all, but



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he could never set my mind at ease about that woman.

I pride myself on my power to study character and motives. It is simply impossible to hoodwink me. The moment I first set eyes on her on the overland train I thought, “There is a woman with a story.” And to think that even now I do not know what that story was is enough to make me let down my back hair and scream, as I did at Aunt Ann’s yesterday when the oysters were not cooked to suit me. She looked able to travel anywhere alone, as she was then. I had my maid and manservant, of course. What with my lovely Skye, and “Ouida’s” latest, my shawls, lunch-basket, candy-jar, and writing-desk (for Sam expects to hear every day), I could not travel without; I don’t see how any one can, though Babette was half-sick and wholly cross, and Alphonse smelled of cheap cigars in the smoking-car; so that really I did have my troubles. She sat in the next seat, and I could not help showing her some kindness in the way of canned turkey, and stuffed olives, and sherry, for she seemed strong in neither body nor purse. She had severe nervous headaches, and I loaned her my vinaigrette. As she returned it, just as we were nearing San Francisco, she said:



"You have been kind to me. I am very grateful. May I ask the meaning of that monogram?" pointing to the initials set in brilliants in the side of the little gold flask.

"My name is Clare," I said. "Those letters stand for my husband's name."

"Ah!" she said, "I am also Mrs. S. C. My name is Capel."

"Indeed!" said I; "that is a name in my husband's family. It is his middle name."

"How strange! but my husband has no relatives living," said she.

I wanted to ask about her husband, but feared she was a widow.

She seemed to read my thoughts.

"My husband is in California somewhere," she went on. "I am going to try and find him."

"Then you have not lately heard from him?" I asked.

"Not for ten years," was her startling reply.

What would Sam say, I thought, to such conduct in a husband!

"How surprised he will be," I said.

"Yes," said she. "I did not know where to write."

I wanted to ask if she thought he was worthy of such search, but I saw she was



poor. Perhaps she hoped he had money. Possibly she was still fond of him. But I thought he had most likely forgotten her; for, though plainly a bright woman, she had none of the dainty curves and fair rose tints that do a man's eyes good—such as I know please Sam in me. I urged her to come to my hotel. I had reached home Thursday night, a week before my husband expected me. I planned to surprise him, but found he had gone on a hunting and fishing trip to San Gregorio. When he came back, I meant to make him help my new acquaintance. I took her under my wing, chose her room, made Babette dress her hair, and we went down to breakfast together Friday morning, when who should sit in front of us but Mark Dillon! He was so amazed to find I had come that he seemed really nervous.

"Bless my soul—Mrs. Clare!" said he, looking as much at her as at me, and then got very red and confused. I never quite knew before how much he admired me. I felt so glad to be at home again, I urged him to come to my rooms after breakfast and practice duets. When he came, Mrs. Capel was with me, and I presented him to her. I saw then he did not seem at ease.



"This is a new friend of mine," I told him. "Her husband is somewhere in California, and I am going to help her find him."

"*You*—help her! Good gracious—no—yes—certainly—oh! of course—by all means," was his strange reply.

He seemed more absent-minded than ever, as if trying to see his way clear for something. At last he said: "Mrs. Clare, I got a letter last night from Sam. Want to hear it?"

"No," said I; "I found one waiting for me, in case I got here while he was gone."

"Ah! with a sonnet to your eyebrow?" he asked.

"No. Sam never writes verse to me nowadays," I said.

"He does to me," said he; "and I want you ladies to hear it," with stress on the word "ladies," as he saw Mrs. Capel about to leave the room. She waited. He went on: "Sam has sent up a rare shot of his, a loon, to be stuffed for our club-rooms. Says he has not had very good luck this season, and it seems to have made him downhearted, to judge from his rhymes:



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PORTENT.

No looker-on — but wild growth, like the fern,  
I feel the hidden current's forceful sway ;  
I must attend to weird cries of the hern,  
Must round the marsh with phantom vapors stray.

And pause, breast-high, where reeds and rushes rear  
Their flaunting craze, to watch the white gulls' flight,  
As, high athwart wide-roving clouds, they veer  
Through darkening air, like waning flecks of light.

The sluggish water dreads the storm's first dip,  
Turns rolling eyes of light toward sullen sky ;  
The winds, as in the cordage of a ship,  
Through tangled forest wander piping by.

They mock the cries of shipwrecked sailors ; shout,  
And wail, and laugh, till I, excited, scream —  
Dead silence follows ! for the goblin rout  
Then know man's presence in their sylvan dream.

I turn where cypress branches interlace  
To arch against the sun's red wane,  
Outlining vast cathedral's gloomy space,  
Half-lit by Gothic window's scarlet stain.

Within this holy hush and solitude  
Entranced I linger, and forget — forget ; —  
No Past above me here can darkly brood,  
Nor Future watch upon my footsteps set.

What voice of hidden Mephistopheles  
With scornful echo startles the lagoon ?  
I feel the current of my life-blood freeze  
At dread derisive laughter of a loon !



Alas!—although I shot him—in my dreams

I hear his warning cry, and watch the storm,  
Till, where the lightning through the shadow gleams  
Upon the marsh, I see my lifeless form!"

"What nonsense!" I began, when the look on his face and hers stopped me. He had handed her the verses to look at, but, with only a glance at them, she was looking at him with a painfully earnest question in her gaze, while his face was that of a culprit who is caught. For the moment I could have sworn they were not the strangers I had thought them. Then she rose, tried to excuse herself, and started to go to her room, but was so faint, I, with Babette, had to help her reach it.

"Worn out from her journey," I explained to Mr. Dillon.

"No excuse needed, Mrs. Clare; I saw for myself."

Then he made a series of failures with our duets for flute and piano which were wont to make us sure of being asked to musical parties. In the middle of Drouet's "Semiramide" he broke down, and turned it off by asking:

"Where did you make her acquaintance?"

"On the overland train. Ah, you are smitten, as I was," I said.



“Are you pleased with her?” he asked.

“Sworn lasting friendship, and vowed to help her find her own true love,” said I.

To hide his next mistake he said, “How do you know he *is* her own *true* love?”

“Oh, I know he must be,” I replied.

“The word ‘fickle’ is unknown to you?” he asked.

“Yes. Is n’t Sam my model?”

He failed again, and begged to be excused from further practice.

Mrs. Capel kept her room with a nervous headache all Saturday, but on Sunday I made her drive with Mr. Dillon and me to the Cliff House. I wisely planned it so neither knew the other was going until too late to pause—starting with her and taking him up on the way. There was a warning of coming storm in the black haze that, as Mr. Dillon said, made the air a magic crystal, showing far-off places as if near, and by the time we had finished luncheon and gone out on the balcony, a wall of fog hid the sea but for what seemed a short space before us. Some one in the parlor played a snatch of Wagner’s “Spinning-Song.”

“Too monotonous,” I said.

“The droning wheel,” said Dillon; “but



you can hear the footfall of fate, see the red sails and black masts of the doomed ship, and, in Listz's version, hear the wind whistle in the rigging." He turned to her as if she had asked a question. "But when the captain finds Senta at her wheel, she is bound to another."

"What can be done then?" I asked.

"Truly," said he, still looking at her, "what *can* be done?"

She thought a moment before replying: "There is the decision of Heine's lover:

"As fickle as the wind thy heart  
That flutters to and fro;  
With black sails sails my ship,  
Across the seas to go."

He sprang up and began pacing up and down, when suddenly a full-rigged vessel, looming through the mist, passed within hail, more phantom-like than real.

"Like a dream!" she said.

"And to them," said he, "this shore looks like dreamland."

"Noiseless, ghostly, and swift as the 'Flying Dutchman,'" she said.

"How absurd for people to rave over that opera!" said I. "That old foggy striding along



the beach, so many paces to certain orchestral chords, and so on; nothing to get so excited over, as folks like you all do.”

“It is because he is fated—like the figure on the fan,” he said with a sigh, and asked us to excuse him a while. I was glad to have him go, for she had caught his trick of watching me, and I was impatient under the musing gaze of two.

When he had gone, she asked: “Suppose it to be Senta who finds the Captain faithless, what ought she to do?”

“You could ask no better person,” I said.

“How do you mean?” she asked, looking at me with wonder.

I felt proud of being appealed to. I knew what should be done, and I told her at once: “Make him pay for the ship she sets sail in.”

“Money!” she said bitterly.

“Yes,” said I. “A man should pay for forgetting *me*. But such a thing is not possible to Sam.”

“One would think you, who have all the money you want, would not value it,” she said.

“Not quite all I want. Sam has promised me a hundred thousand dollars for my birthday, next week, and I am glad to get it.”



"A hundred thousand dollars!" she said, as if deep in thought; and after a pause went on: "Suppose a woman to have had two lovers, and to have chosen the one who proves least faithful——"

"Don't fancy such things!" I cried. "Wait till he is found. Oh, why don't you advertise for your husband?"

"Lost, strayed, or stolen," drawled Mr. Dillon, who had lounged back unseen, and startled us by speaking.

"How shall I make amends?" he asked.

"By writing some verses about that mirage-like vision of a sail," said Mrs. Capel.

While he wrote, with note-book on knee, the fog cleared, and there was a strange sunset which charmed them, but I was too vexed over the damp the fog left on my crimps to care.

He said: "A poem in colors!"

She quoted: "The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun!"

"Why was that not said in verse instead of prose?" said he.

"Use it," she hinted.

"It would be no worse theft," he answered, "than 'Sweet By-and-By,' which is but a poor version of the old Irish air, 'Has sorrow thy young days shaded?'"



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Soon after he read to us :

HAPHAZARD.

In the balcony jutting above the wild ocean,  
Like scene an Arabian Night reveals,  
Where oft we linger, with gay emotion,  
To look at the rocks and the sunning seals,  
To number the clouds and the gulls, wind-shaken,  
And name the crowding white horses whose manes  
Float and flutter to spray as they sink overtaken —  
Th' sea reclaims —

'T was here we stood, when a mist unbroken  
Made the world seem sketched on a vaped pane,  
Gray walls surrounded, and blurred all token  
Whether sun or moon might arise or wane ;  
'T was like a dawning or dreamy gloaming,  
And a potent spell upon you and me,  
For as we paused there our thoughts were roaming  
Ships at sea.

As if in conjurer's crystal, looming  
Through murky depths, sailed a ship afar  
Like thistle-down in its phantom blooming,  
Or a floating film a breath might mar ;  
As if carved of the moonstone's cloudy sheen,  
Through the mist it glimmered with softened glow,  
And its sails afret with the wind were seen  
Intaglio.

And you murmured, “Perhaps in that vessel one  
passes

Whom we might have adored had we known ;  
And it may be their view our own so surpasses  
Their fantasies shoreward are blown.”



"Alas!" I answered, "We have no warning  
When the things that almost occur are near—  
Or, like our dreams between dusk and dawning,  
Disappear!"

Then they fell to talking of omens, second sight, the sway of one mind over another, and such ghostly stuff, to my high glee and scorn.

"People who can believe in such things," I said, "are easily duped."

"Mrs. Clare," he said, "as I have often told you, you must some time be most completely fooled. It is sure to be."

I had not time to tell him what a vain boast this was, when Sam, who had reached town, learned where we had gone, and followed, came out among us. As, nodding to Mr. Dillon, he rushed toward me, he noticed Mrs. Capel, but he was quite overcome at the sight of me. He turned pale, his eyes flashed, he could scarcely speak.

"What is it?" I cried. "Are you ill?"

He tried to turn it off with some pretense of a passing faintness, but he seemed stunned. Of course, I understood—he was vexed not to have been here when I returned.

"Why didn't I hear from you?" he asked Mr. Dillon, angrily.

"I sent a dispatch in reply to your letter," said his friend.



“I never got it,” said Sam, crossly.

I think Mrs. Capel must have one of the sensitive electroplate minds Mr. Dillon talks of; for she said nothing, only, turning red and pale by turns, watched Sam with searching gaze, as was natural when I had promised her his help. I hastened to make them acquainted, to tell him about her, and beg him to aid her to find her husband; but she put up one hand as if to stop me, vainly tried to speak, and looking an appeal to Mark Dillon—I shall always think his queer aspect then was conscious guilt,—slid out of her chair in a deep swoon, from which Mr. Dillon and I had hard work to revive her, while Sam looked on, frightened and displeased. He was so kind he would not come to town with us for fear of crowding us in her faint state. But I knew he was angry to have our meeting so broken in upon by a stranger. Indeed, it made him take such a dislike to her that he refused to have anything to say to her.

“You are prejudiced,” I said.

“Perhaps I am,” he replied, coolly, and would have nothing to do with her. He seemed all worn out by his trip to San Gregorio, and in the evening had a severe fit of cramp in his right arm and shoulder. My



head was so full of Mrs. Capel that I had just burst out about it:

"I believe I know where to lay my hand on her husband."

Sam looked amazed, gave a husky sort of roar, and that very moment was seized with this cramp that kept his man rubbing him for a long time. When Alphonse had been sent out, I went on, though Sam had to look over some business papers, and could hardly attend to me.

"I feel sure that Mr. Dillon knows," I said.

Sam looked up as if annoyed. He cannot bear anything roundabout, while I like mysteries. Perhaps because I can solve them.

"Yes," said I, at the risk of vexing him about his friend, "*I* believe *he* is her husband."

Sam gave a sigh of relief, the cramp had been so bad. With an admiring glance he cried "By Jove! I never thought of that. There's woman's keen wit!"

But then I always knew I was more shrewd than others. "As a reward of merit" he brought me some fine candies, saying, "A Market-street confectioner advertises these as 'high-toned.' Does he mean their rank flavor?"



Perhaps they made me dream, as the lady in the next room says it is the sugar in the whisky-punch which flies to one's head; anyway, I dreamed strangely that night. I seemed to stand at the elbow of some man whose face I could not see as he bent over a letter he was writing—a queer letter; and the dream was so plain that I saw him trace each word, and, leaning over him, read as he wrote:

“As disembodied spirits we might agree; but as life is as it is, so dependent on our mortal frames and temperaments, I have made my choice.”

I roused from sleep to find myself in bed alone. Babette had left the night-lamp burning, as usual. I knew Sam was in the next room casting up accounts, as he often sat up to do. Then, puzzling over Mark Dillon and that woman, I dropped off again—to the same dream—the figure writing with face bent toward the right, and myself standing at his left shoulder. He had written on, and while I watched, his hand formed these words:

“Silence, with instant departure for Europe, with a solemn promise never to return or send a message to me by word or letter. These are my sole terms, even if I must pay at the rate of a thousand dollars for each letter in the words.”



Again I struggled to my senses; I sat up in bed to be sure I was now awake. Sam came in, and was alarmed, thinking I was ill.

"I wish," said I, "I could give Mr. Dillon a piece of my mind."

"Better not meddle in what does not concern you," said Sam, quite gruffly for him.

An hour or two later, I was roused by Sam's talking in his sleep. "Is she not worth a hundred thousand dollars?" he muttered. He was dreaming of the sum he had promised me. Then he grew angry. "Why won't you go?" he cried, fiercely. "There is the money!"

"Sam! Sam!" I called, "who is meddling now with other folks' affairs. You are dreaming."

Only half-awake, he cried: "You shall not part us!" and grasped me firmly by the arm.

"What *is* the matter?" I said, waking him at last.

"What was I saying?" he asked anxiously, and scarcely slept again. So I did not wonder he did not want to go to the theatre Monday night, as I had before his return engaged with Mrs. Capel and his friend to do.

"You must guard yourself to-night," I said to Mr. Dillon, as we went to call for Mrs.



Capel. “I have lent her the bewitched fan.”

I did not think of his taking it seriously; but he muttered: “Great heavens! has it reached her at last?”

“What is that?” I asked. “It seems to me we are all a little crazy about this stranger.”

“It is all your fault,” he answered; “you brought her here.”

“Did I?” I asked. “It was her absent husband—you know very well what brought her—I think you know *him*.” I added this recklessly, but was surprised at the effect; he got so excited.

“Oh, Mrs. Clare,” he cried, “don’t ask me anything about it! I know nothing, nothing, nothing!”

“As well as you know *yourself*,” I went on; “*you* are—” I faltered. I felt I was verging on rudeness. We had reached her door. I dared not go on. But he understood.

“*I*—her husband! It is like telling a man who is bound hand and foot that he is free! I—”

But his nervous knock brought her at once to her door, and I lost whatever he meant to say.

After we were in our box, Mrs. Capel looked



at the play-bill. "The burlesque *Evangeline!*" she exclaimed, and turned to Mr. Dillon. "You have known a burlesque *Evangeline* in real life. There *are* such footballs of fate."

He looked quickly at me. "We will not talk of unhappy things to-night," he said; then, turning to her, added: "Silence is *golden.*"

Bent on making us enjoy, he brought us flowers and candy, and talked more than his wont. He toyed a while with the Indian fan, sketching the history of fans, and ending, as he returned it to Mrs. Capel, with: "Among the Asiatics a fan on a plate of special shape told a condemned nobleman his sentence, and when he reached to take the gift, was the moment of losing his life."

"What a sigh you gave as you took the fan, Mrs. Capel," I said, "as if *you* had been sentenced."

"To exile—with no hope of reprieve," said Mr. Dillon.

Some stir of late-comers caught my glance; when I again looked at Mrs. Capel her breast heaved, the fan, half-open, shook in her hand; behind it I caught a glimpse of a long slip of paper, like a check.



“I feel faint,” she said. Mr. Dillon brought her some water, and then she sat back out of sight, and he talked to me about those we knew who were in the house. But as I do not choose to let people dupe me with secrets right under my eyes, I soon said:

“Was that a love poem?”

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“That paper slyly thrust in and creased to fold with the fan,” I said.

I think the sounds from the orchestra screened a muttered oath, he looked so angry.

“Was it poetry?” I insisted.

“Not poetry, but a bit of philosophy—and a secret of mine,” he added.

“I shall ask her to let me see it,” I said, for I was provoked that he should try to fool *me*.

He seemed confused, and, turning, looked at Mrs. Capel. The fan lay closed in her lap.

“Allow me,” he said, gently taking it from her. At the same moment his glance, roving over the house, fell on some one he knew.

“Excuse me,” he said, and rushed out. He came back almost at once, and, sitting beside me, opened the fan, withdrew a slip of thin paper from the sliding sticks and gave it to me. I quickly unfolded it and found—a blank!



"Mrs. Clare, you have a very vivid fancy," he said, with his cynical smile, which makes me sometimes almost hate him, and think if not Sam's friend I would cut him.

"Only think," he went on, "how all these commonplace people around us have each a story as picturesque and diverting as any play! There *is* a chance for your fancy."

"I should like to know all about their private lives," I said.

"Heaven forbid!" he cried. "Never try to go behind the scenes in real life. You would find the same dingy makeshifts, curtains, traps, and sudden steps up and down, as on the stage."

Mrs. Capel came forward, and seemed like herself again. But I watched them both, for I felt that I was on the track of a strange story. Coming out, I was behind them, and found on the floor where Mrs. Capel had been sitting a sheet of paper, on which these lines were written (without doubt, Mr. Dillon had meant them for me. I cannot remember breaking any promise to him—that is, of course, just poetical flummery. He must, man-like, have forgotten for the moment that I had lent the fan, and that it was not I who would find them in it, and his feint about the blank



paper was done to hide his shame at his blunder. It was all quite plain):

A FANTASY.

"Eclipse, and sound of shaken hills and wings  
Darkening, and blind inexpiable things."

I. — THE FAN.

Toy the most feminine! Woman's will! Yet —  
Chinese the saying is — now I forget!

Ivory, filmy, the fan of frail fret  
Holding one realm  
With the Marie Antoinette collaret  
Baleful in ray, crime-beset carcanet  
Famed gem on gem.

Eight words by Chinese sage at Woman hurled.  
In minor tones my heart-throbs there upwhirled!

Bauble of lace all embroidered, unfurled  
Shadow in freak,  
That, at the court and play, feigned to the world  
Blush-roses bloomed upon rouged and empearled  
Pompadour's cheek.

That pedant ere he posed o'er learnèd primer,  
Quaffed Rose-In-Bloom romance in foaming brimmer!

Down through the Feasts of the Lantern that  
glimmer  
Three thousand years,  
After the eye of fair Kansì lent shimmer  
Over her masque, premier fan, none make dimmer  
This of vague fears!



## II.—SPREAD.

Reed broken ; trailing wing ; a darkened sky ;  
Each are inherence of that bitter cry !

Far, high horizon, leaning awry,  
A pallid moon  
Ruminant wandering through a blue sky.  
Curlew low flying, gull hanging high,  
Down-tilting loon.

World-grief is through his murmur surging free,  
So moan the billows, and the wind in tree !

Who is here, roaming alone by the sea,  
Drift on the shore,  
Blown and oblique ? Let the dream-figure flee !  
Why doth he, beating his brow, turn to me ?  
What to deplore ?

His breaking heart in a proverb embalming,  
How could a cynic — in China — be harming ?

Picture of dread, a prophetic alarming,  
Fate and despair !  
Meanwhile the orchestra thrills with its charming  
*Traumbilder*, Lumbye, composer, becalming  
Castle in air !

## III.—FURLED.

Phrase like a ghost with a finger on lip !  
Love-hooded heart like a bird let to slip !



Plume upon plume here with down on the tip,  
 Hovered in flight  
 O'er bramble-hid city, voyaging ship,  
 Desert, mirage and simoon, but to dip  
 At tranquil height.

On wind of every fan blown to its aim,  
 Blows, blowing yet, that sigh of wrathful blame!

Filigree-silver and sandal-wood frame  
 Hint caravan;  
 Deep mining-tunnel with torches aflame;  
 Incense and rite in the great Brahma name,  
 Blessing or ban.

All the world over doth Beauty cajoie,  
 Love learn the wisdom of that Chinese dole!

Clouds of enchantment around you uproll  
 From fan and glove,  
 As if each flower you've worn left its soul,  
 Like painted dream, where to Earth downward stole  
 Cherub, or Love!

#### IV.—THE TASSEL.

Few are his words, but how much they betray;  
 Pathos of novel or heart-rending play!

If—as the Magi held—though all astray,  
 Life a blind road,  
 I but intangible fibre obey  
 Spun from unpitying star or my day,  
 What may this bode?



My heart his tent, I hear him low complain;  
Star falling, venomed flower, are in the strain !

Mine to be fashioned like mere tassel-skein ?  
Frosted the flame,  
Chill of your coldness to fire in my vein !  
I! Flung from your hand as whim may ordain,  
Like puppet-game ?

V.—THE BOX.

Passionate sage and I! Hearts of one race !  
On my Great Wall of woe his words I trace !

Trifle may prophesy, even that case,  
Cushioned with crape,  
Broad, rounded top with a narrowing base,  
Black on the white of your velvet and lace,  
A coffin shape !

The saying? Truth—in China or Japan—  
*A woman's word is like a broken fan !*

Tuesday, I was on my way to the street;  
the elevator had just touched the ground-floor,  
when I found that stupid Babette had given  
me the wrong gloves, two of the same hue,  
but where one had twelve buttons the other  
had but six. I signed to the boy to go up  
again; but he waited for a couple just coming  
from the street-door, who entered, and, in the



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change from outdoors to darkness, did not see me in the corner, but kept on talking.

“You must cheer up,” she said, “and not look on life as a losing game.”

“Perhaps you thought it one,” he sneered, “till you had the chance to cry *checkmate*. You can talk thus when you could give up the certainty of happiness in a second venture, give up the most constant of your girlhood’s lovers, give up the opportunity to redeem a broken promise—all for the possibilities of money!”

“But think of those possibilities!” she answered; “happiness is among them as surely as money need not be reckoned in happiness. *You* cannot judge; you have not known the bitter taste of poverty

“But I *do* judge. I know you are lost in a golden mist. I can not see how you could keep from seizing your freedom.”

“At the cost of that butterfly’s wings?” she asked. “Why should I break down a lovely flower? I could not hurt one who has been kind to me.”

“But my conscience is not easy to have matters go this way,” said he.

“What is a man’s conscience?” she said. “A passing gust of wind that blows in the line



of his glance, always coming up behind him, never blowing against him!"

"But *he* has obeyed the dictates of conscience in—"

"Dictates of conscience!" she broke in, "in a man who knows no difference between a desire and a duty!"

"I can not wonder that you are bitter," he said, "to find your husband as you have—"

"Oh, Mrs. Capel!" I cried, grasping her arm, "*have* you found him? Oh, I'm so glad!—kiss me, my dear. Oh, tell me all about it! Come to my rooms—I will not go out this afternoon."

I suppose I startled them both, seizing hold of her in the dimness, for she really screamed: "O my soul! I didn't see you!"

"Great heavens! Mrs. Clare!" cried Mark Dillon. "Mrs. Capel is not well. She is on her way to her room to lie down. She *has* found—"

"A kind friend in *you*, Mrs. Clare," she broke in. "I feel your sympathy. No—I have—*not* found—the man I married."

Then the elevator touched our floor, and she and I stepped out. Mr. Dillon bowed and went down again. Mrs. Capel's eyes gleamed, and her lips wore a tense curve, as she begged



me to excuse her; she needed rest. As I watched her pass down the hall, her air made me think of the woman Sam can not bear to see walk into the dining-room, because her gait recalls some one he has known. The more I thought over their strange talk together, the more sure I felt that there was some secret between them. I meant to know what.

Our hotel gave a hop on Wednesday night. Sam and I were on the floor waiting for the music to begin. He often gets the band to play what he likes.

“Have you told the leader what you will have?” asked Mark Dillon, as he strolled up to us. “Shall I name ‘The Open Road’?”

“Or ‘Man lives but once,’” Sam answered, and his friend gave the order.

When we sat down, he joined us, saying, after one of his old, long looks at me:

“Well—Mrs. Capel has gone.”

Sam walked off, as he always did when she was spoken of. So dull of Mr. Dillon not to know *I* was the one most interested in her.

“Without a word of farewell!” I said.

“Oh, yes,” he answered; “she sent a good-by to you. She got a letter Monday night that caused her sudden start. She meant to leave yesterday morning, but missed the train.”



"Poor woman!" said I. "How I wish we could have helped her! She had her journey for nothing."

"No," he said; "she gained by it—experience."

"Yes," said I; "she is richer, I suppose."

"Ah?" He spoke as if surprised.

"Yes," I answered; "in thought and feeling."

"Oh—yes," said he; "yes, I think she is richer. It has been worth to her at least a hundred thousand dollars."

He was watching me so closely that I knew he felt I suspected him, and I changed the subject by asking: "Isn't it a shame about the break in stocks?"

"Break! Why, you are dreaming. Stocks are booming."

"Oh, no. Sam has just lost in them the hundred thousand dollars he promised me for my birthday."

"Is it possible? I was not aware—oh, yes, to be sure."

His wits seemed to be straying; but I suppose he was lost in admiration of my exquisite dress—gold-colored satin and cloth-of-gold, embroidered with seed-pearls. Or was he thinking about her?



“How would her husband have felt if she had found him?” I asked.

“How can I more than another answer that question?” said he. “Ask Sam.”

“I am sorry for him,” I said.

“For—whom?” he asked.

“For her husband,” I answered. “He has lost a good wife.”

“Well,” he said, musing, “I once thought she had a soul. But only a few souls are made. Half the world have none. I’m afraid she was like the most of us, mere painted slides on the lantern of Life. But suppose—we will say suppose—she had found him married again?”

“But,” said I, losing patience, “she did n’t even find him.”

“Oh, no,” he replied, quickly; “I did n’t say she did.”

He had been idly playing with my Indian fan, and now suddenly asked if I did not think the figure in the picture less plain than of yore. “The old juggler really could foretell then,” he muttered.

But I wanted to solve the mystery, and began by asking, “Why don’t you marry?”

He smiled. “Shall I say I am the victim of the cruel laws of being, or of chance? I only wait at a banquet where I inhale the odor of



other men's cake, and hear the splash of others' wine."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"That married women please me most," he said.

Of course, I knew it all the time, but was surprised that he owned it to me.

"But lately," he went on, "my wonted pose of looker-on has been disturbed. I have just been a heavy loser by getting too absorbed in another man's game."

"What was it? Faro?"

"No—yes—yes, it was a very good game of faro. Do you know what that is?"

"No. How is it played?"

"It is all chance," he replied; "the first card loses, and the second card wins."

He bowed and loitered off through the whirling, jostling throng. I was glad to lose sight of his cynical smile and sound of his affected drawl. It was two or three hours later, just twelve o'clock, when, tired of dancing, I sat listening to the "Oginski," and waiting for Sam, who stood not far off, telling some one the love-lorn legend of the music. After the last bar, I heard his words: "Here the Polish lover, mad with despair, went from the ballroom out into the night and shot himself."



A chilly wind swept round me, a gust that tore my fan out of my tight-gloved left hand, which was trying to also hold bouquet and handkerchief, while I beckoned Sam to come.

"They must have opened a window somewhere," I told him. "Do have it closed."

"I feel the wind, too, now I come here," he said, picking up my fan, and going to see about it, but he came back without finding any reason for the blast. "I feel it only here," he said; but we went to our rooms. As we left the elevator, a rush of cold air again chilled us to the marrow. I shivered, and trying to draw my cloak more closely round me, the fan slipped out of my hand as if some one had snatched it, and in some odd chance was thrown over the banisters as we passed the stairs, and falling many feet on the marble pavement, was wholly shattered. I could have cried, I was so vexed to lose it. I wished I had taken the cherry-stone bracelet.

"The house seems full of draughts to-night," said Sam, as he locked our door.

Shivering, too, I answered, "I wonder how far Mrs. Capel has got on her journey."

"She can't be colder in the cars than we are here," said Sam, poking the fire, which we always have at night; but all at once it seemed to have been needless, for we had to open the



windows. Sam tried to comfort me for the loss of the fan; but he was in a very jolly mood, and kept pirouetting all through the rooms. “By Jove!” he cried, “this is a world worth living in, isn’t it? Oh, Minnie! you looked as sweet as a peach to-night. I’m so proud of you! I’m very sorry about your fan.”

“Oh, I am!” said I. “There is nothing like it in this country.”

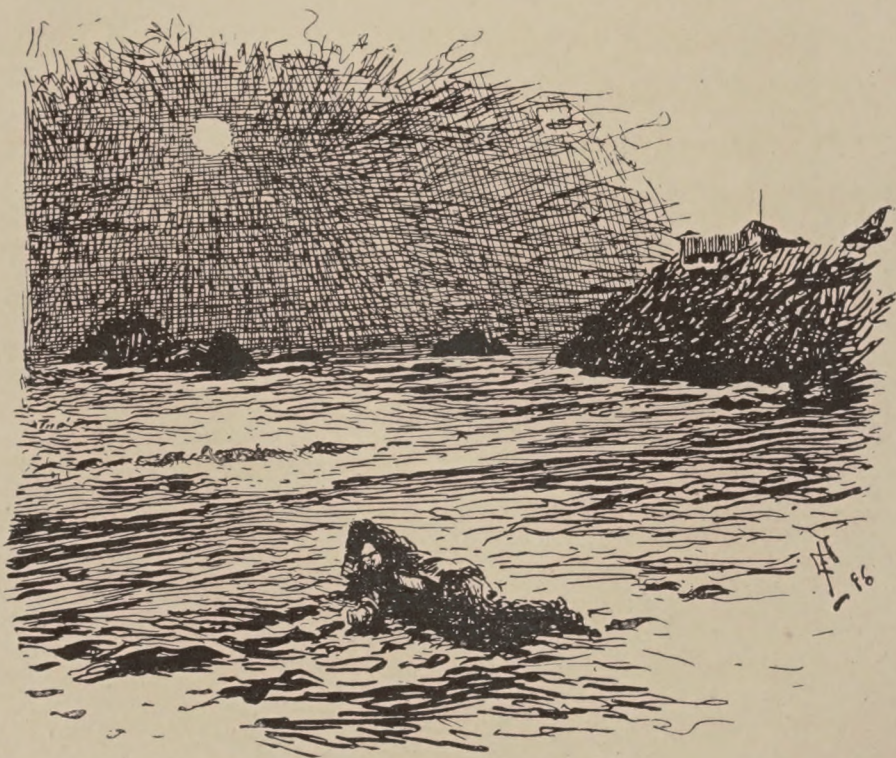
“Not only that,” he said, “but I hate to have Mark know it is ruined. But I’m so happy to-night I can’t grieve so much. Come and kiss me, Minnie.”

Dear Sam! There never was a more fond and faithful husband. How I pity wives with husbands who can be false!

## II.—PASSAGE FROM THE DIARY OF MRS. CAPEL.

*Thursday morning.*—My nerves have been so shaken by the ordeal I have passed that I could not rest well last night. As I lay in my berth the very motion of the train seemed to throb against my brain. “You are not the same poor creature who passed over this very road a week ago—not the same—not the same!” I could not keep from thinking of poor old Mark. How true *he* had been! But











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what folly it would have been to trust any man again! I drew my watch from under my head, made out to see that the hands were on twelve, and then dropped to sleep as to a series of strange visions. Out of blank darkness suddenly shapes itself before me that fan from India, which will confront me. I can not turn so that it does not follow, until I see and cry out: “Why—*the figure has gone from the picture!*” Then it all vanishes. Now I see the beach near the Cliff House. There is a full moon, and Mark paces there alone, though a high wind is blowing. But such a weight is on my soul that I groan myself awake. (Could he have been there, I wonder? Was his mind, looking out on the moonlit sea and lovely sands, reflected in mine, and vividly defined against the chiaroscuro of dreamland?) Then I am in a ballroom, the band playing the wildly sad “Oginski,” full of deep-drawn sighs and longing. I am conscious of a swarm of dancers, yet seem to be only sure of Samuel and my lovely friend who sits near him, looking very beautiful, and takes no notice of Mark, who comes up with some queer disfigurement of his face, and behaves very strangely, snatching her fan out of her hand and flinging it on the floor. (Probably I



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dreamed this because I knew he disliked to see her have it.) She pays no heed to him, but shivers. Samuel gets her fan, and soon they all three leave the hall, she and "Clare" acting as if chilly. Mark again tears the fan from her, and dashes it down as if from some great height. Dream-like, she does not notice him, though grieved to lose her fan, which, I see, is shivered to bits. Then I lose sight of all of them—I hang across the firm but unseen arm of some shadowy presence that bears me away with it. I hear no voice, but feel borne in upon me these words: "Beyond even the possibilities of Money!" I float in mid-air, though it does not seem so much that I move higher and higher, as that my old surroundings drop away—is *that* the city with its net of lights far below? and that vast silver shield must be the ocean! Clouds bar off that view. I am chilled and breathless. How dazzling the stars grow! Is that dim speck our world—down there by the moon? Is this—I feel the unseen arm loose its hold, and the vapor that seems like a presence shoots far above, as if torn from me. I am falling, falling through endless depths. I awoke with a convulsive start, to find myself in the swinging train, with the crazy beat upon my brain. "Not the same! Oh, not the same!"



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III.—PARAGRAPH FROM SAN FRANCISCO  
PAPERS OF THURSDAY EVENING.

Last night, Mark Dillon left the hop at the  
—— Hotel, and with a party of gentlemen  
drove to the Cliff House. Leaving them at  
supper, he went out on the beach at midnight,  
and shot himself in the temple. No cause for  
the suicide is known. He was a man of refine-  
ment and culture, but had spent most of his  
fortune in foreign travel. He was well known  
in society as musician and poet, and in his  
pocket were found these lines (dated yester-  
day):

A LOST HOPE.

Oft when the sun has set  
A wondrous afterglow will linger yet;  
Through darkening dome the trailing gorgeous hues  
Unite, dissolve, slow change to shadows gray —  
As echoes of some haunting tune perplex,  
That come and go and vex,  
And all the idler's hollow thought confuse  
With occult sway.

When a great hope has set  
Long must its halo stir a deep regret,  
Illuminating oft the gloomy thought  
With rays from sunken argosy.  
The floating cloud of foiled sweet fancies nued  
By it, are viewed  
With aching heart and soul that, half-distraught,  
Yearn — oh, how helplessly!







IN SILVER UPON PURPLE: "STAR-  
CROSS'D LOVERS."







## IN SILVER UPON PURPLE: "STAR- CROSS'D LOVERS."

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*Pastel.*

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"From no human equation can you eliminate that unknown factor, the most mysterious of all, the unexpected."

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Midsummer and midnight in an Italian city in the sixteenth century. The narrow, crooked streets are dim and quiet. The purple dark above is strewn with worlds like silver sands, yet so solemn and mysterious one feels that they may form cabalistic characters, and dreads *some consequence yet hanging in the stars.*

A nobleman passes along the lonely streets toward the cemetery, followed by his page, who bears a torch and a basket of flowers. The torchlight casts glints upon the heavy gold embroidery of a sinister heraldic flower which wreathes the young gentleman's white cloak, and lets the white satin puffing in his slashed sleeves gleam, the gems set in the hilt of his rapier flash. The frosty plumes in his



hat nod above a refined, proud face. Many women have sighed, have wept, because he passed them without a glance. The stately elegance of the man himself is far more than his adornments. What could thwart the will of such a fine, majestic being?

Those shifting, silver sands, that dust of worlds, athwart the purple dark long-blown and blowing far!

“These milky blossoms,” he muses, “are not white enough to match the purity of that fair girl who was to have been my wife. I ought to thank Heaven that I lose her only as the bride of Death. I could never have yielded her to any other bridegroom. My Beautiful! My Own!”

He will never know that she loved, even married, another. He moves haughtily toward that unforeseen but immediate, sudden fray in which he is to be killed.

Athwart the purple dark, long-blown and blowing far, those shifting silver sands, that dust of worlds!

The page tries to stride like his master, and longs to be the grown man who can do as he likes. The shadows leap from them, point at them, draw grotesque likenesses of them, crowd back and follow. Here is a lofty win-



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dow, over which a fantastic gargoyle, half-demon, half-dragon, is lolling out its tongue, as if in derision, but a shadow closes its mouth, even cowl its head, and leaves its sharp claws, holding an open book, its coiled tail, by which it hangs from the roof, without meaning. Below, in the open window, a girl of scarlet lips and bright eyes is leaning out into the summer night. Many men, with their hungry hearts in their eyes, have followed her to and from mass. What shall assail with stifling torment a creature of such grace and charm?

Long-blown and blowing far, that dust of worlds, athwart the purple dark those shifting silver sands!

She sees the picturesque passing of knight and page. She knows their mission. She does not regret the death; her own lover was too much taken by that girl at the late masque. "I have been wrong not to let him know how his wooing has thrilled me," she thinks. "When he serenaded me the night before, I neither lighted my window nor flung down a flower. I will make amends now for my long neglect of him. I will embroider that old love-song he sang for the border of the cloak he shall wear at our wedding. It shall



be of sky-blue velvet, the border of satin, the five lines, the stems of the notes, the bars in silver, the notes of seed-pearls. With ropes of pearls and white plumes on his hat, how handsome he will look! His beauty is a melody, a harmony for the eye beyond any the ear ever heard! And its theme is Love!"

The purple dark, that shifting dust of worlds, those silver sands long-blown and blowing far athwart!

The serene night is too pitiful to let her feel any foreboding of ill, of news that dawn will bring of a triple tragedy to-night in the cemetery, any hint of the secret which will be such distress to her to know—that her lover has already married the girl whose beauty bewitched him at the masque.

An old nurse who has come from a palace in mourning, and whose black figure, thrown up by the circling rays of torchlight, is a blot on the paler darkness behind her, sees by the dancing flare the beatified girl in the window and the passing beneath of the jaunty, disdainful cavalier and his strutting, envious page. The lovely girl, with pink roses in dark curls shadowing her high forehead, wears deep rose-velvet, heavily embroidered with crystal beads, the bodice a glittering mass of them,



like a vision, all for an instant, of tears she is soon to shed. The old woman has a vivid glimpse of her against a background of gold-colored tapestry. The gargoyle grins, its mouth gapes into mock laughter, then appears to hastily shut, as grim shadows close around the dreaming girl and pursue the departing cavalier.

“Now, afore Heaven! why couldn’t they fall in love with one another?” the nurse mumbles. “Just as young and handsome as the others, and with the chinks! Yet these must go down through the ages, as they say, forever famous as the jilted ones! Nobody will be concerned about what they may have suffered. A dainty beauty, a brave gallant—they deserve a better fate. Poor County Paris! Poor Rosaline!”

That dust of worlds, those shifting, silver sands long-blown and blowing far athwart the purple dark!







“ARE THE DEAD DEAD?”







## “ARE THE DEAD DEAD?”

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Who shall determine the power of sympathy, or assign to that power its limit?

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My story is so strange that I cannot expect many to believe it. Only a short time ago I myself would have scoffed at such a tale. I would not tell it, but for the faint hope that it may lead others—if such there be—to own to any like experience; for I cannot think that I alone, of all the world, have had such glimpse of the mysterious outlying region usually veiled from mortals. Whoever you are, now about to read what comes, I implore you comfort me, if you can, by writing: “I, too, have heard and seen!” Come forward and share my burden before I lose my mind.

Marvel not that I grant the request of the club which asked for this statement. Since that awful experience I feel lifted above the paltry secret-keeping of this world. I own our spiritual kinship. On the Day of Judgment all will be known; why should I hesitate to give now a brief account of what, after all,



might have happened to any one? For we are all tangled in strange meshes of circumstance.

But it must be seldom that one is allowed to see how one's thoughts or acts here may, long after one is gone, affect people one may not have known; to see how, before unguessed, life might have been different; to find that one's passions last as strong as in life, or stronger. But are they not one's self! Without them we might as well be lost in the Universal Spirit of the Brahmins.

That no one has seen and heard such proof of this until now weighs nothing against it. Sir John Herschel has said, that of all the fusions that might be of the fifty or sixty elements which chemistry shows there are on the earth, it is likely—nay, almost sure—that some have not been made. Those who cannot understand my story should remember that to the blind the touch of ice or fire is the same. Those who doubt this tale are like the Indian prince told of by Hume, who would not think there could be ice.

I have another reason for writing this; I owe it to the club upon which I rather forced myself to tell the cause of my abject terror when they saw nothing. I know some of them thought I was crazed; they will feel



sure of it, perhaps, when I say that, so far as human judgment could go, it seemed to me at first that my joining them sprang from the wealth of bloom this year on the great heliotrope under my parlor-window, and from a chance call; but now these seem but links in a chain, running into past and future beyond our ken.

I filled a vase on my piano with the flowers, whose strong, sweet, wine-like odor led me to rhymes. Then I played and sang till, through the dreamful scent and the charm of music, I was rapt in clouds far above the world, and so little pleased to have a caller that I paid slight heed to him; and, on the plea of playing for him, did some hard practice, till, with aching arms, I turned round to find he had caught up the leaf of note-paper I had written on, and was placing his eyeglass to see what it was. With some notion that it was a joke to do so, he read aloud my

RONDEL.

Strange depth of passion freights the heavy scent  
Of heliotrope; there breathes a discontent  
From pallid purple upon snow upthrown,  
Like haze of hills afar with white cloud blent;  
All vague regret and mad desire seem loan  
From odor blown.



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Sweet things that never were pervade my thought,  
As when sad music sounds, with yearning fraught,  
That makes the present pass behind two tears,  
All that the future may unfold seem naught.  
Some past unknown was blest. Too quickly veers  
The lapse of years.

I cannot read nor sing—I only sigh.  
A haunting presence in my room is nigh;  
I suffocate with a delicious dole.  
What spirit stronger than my own is by?  
Is this fierce will, that can my mind control,  
The flower's soul?

“Humph!” said he. “You ought to join the Ghost Club.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. “I had not heard of one.”

“Well, it is kept quiet,” he said; “but it is a small club, whose members go to houses said to be haunted, to see what truth there may be in the tales. You know that one out on Valencia street, near Fifteenth? They have spent some time there; and in the large house here in town, on Sutter street, which was vacant so long, and at last taken, with its fine grounds, for a beer-garden.”

“What happened?” I asked. “Was any one frightened into a fit?”

“No,” said he; “they have seen nothing



yet. But if you watch to-morrow night, you will see them marching up here to the house over the way.”

I began to be interested. “That house!” I said. “I did not know anything was the matter with it. But I know it has long been to let.” I did not tell him what a part of my reveries it had been—not only for its picturesque look, but because of the music I had once heard from its windows.

“It is not easy to let,” he went on, “because the first owner poisoned himself there. Why don’t you join the club? You are fanciful enough. I can give you letters to the chief members.”

“I might—for fun,” I said; “I have no faith.”

“Neither have they; they call it a quest for truth.”

I let him write the letters—two to women, one to a man—three out of the seven who formed the club. The last thing that night I paused by my window to look over at the house—square, high, dark, outlined against the stars, far above the street, which was cut through the hill at some date since the building of the house, which stands near the head of about a hundred zigzag steps, with landings



here and there at the turns, the first flight boarded from the street, and looking like a switch-tender's hut on a railroad.

Behind an uncared-for garden of dusty evergreens, and half-hidden in yellow and white jasmine, the lonely house, with its closed windows, made me think of a giant with shut eyes lying in a garden under a spell. Did it ever dream? Sometimes I half-believed in flitting lights and changeful shadows behind one shutterless window upstairs, but thought it must be the reflection of the headlight of a passing street-car dummy.

That house had long been like a conscious comrade in my day-dreams. It was linked in my mind with an offer of marriage I once had from one for whom I cared very little, but whom circumstances nearly brought me to accept. But through the open windows came such a strain of warning music that, creatures of chance impulses that we are, swayed by a look or a tone, my mind changed in spite of me. I was lifted out of my usual self, and had strength to do right. I never knew anything of the unseen singer but his love for his art as shown by daily study which I heard. That "sound which was a soul" surely saved me from making my life a mere



hard, rude outline, from losing all the picturesque effects of light and shade which romance, hope, and feeling give. But it was strangely done, by making the man at my feet so suddenly hateful to me.

I could not help wishing to join the Ghost Club, though I thought our pains would be vain. I felt a strange interest in the plan. It made me restless that night. While dressing in the morning, I looked up again at the lonesome-looking house, and, nodding gayly toward it, cried: “*You have haunted me!*”

No one could have felt lighter-hearted and more free from dread than I, as during the day I presented my letters, and gained consent to my joining the club “for that one house.” Heaven knows I have now no wish to thus visit another!

When the club gathered that night at the doorway to the steps over the way, I joined them. A queer group. A believer, a doubter, an inquirer, a strict church member, and others who came, as I did, for pastime. Some were late, and had not yet come when we wound up the long stairs, and waited at the door for some one who was to bring the key.

“Nothing is too strange to happen,” said the inquirer, who, with his wife, seemed



gravely exploring a strange region. “There is nothing which may not be in the wide margin of the unknown around all we know.”

“The Bible tells us,” said the pious man, “‘There is a universe to us invisible, but not, therefore, unreal.’”

“But I cannot think,” said the doubter, “that those who have gone there think of us; for ‘Death remembers to forget.’”

“Yet Isaac Taylor thought,” said the believer, “the human and extra-human crowd might be within any given bounds; but as they are commonly unseen and unheard by us, so we may be the same to them.”

“Like the voices the Talmud tells of,” said a Jewess, laden with flesh and lace and diamonds, “the sounds which pass through the world, and are not heard by any creatures in it.”

He nodded, and went on: “Jung Stilling and Oberlin also held, we can be only ghosts to them, as they to us.”

“No one ever saw a ghost not made by his fancy,” said the doubter—a Jew. “It is always like that German tale of a student who fought a duel with a spectre, who, when he dropped the cloak from his face, was seen to be himself!”



“That is why the club was formed,” said the believer; “doctors own that more than one may have an illusion, but say there is no such thing as delusion for a group of people.”

The pious man patted my Spitz dog. “He may see more than we can,” said he, “as Balaam’s ass saw the angel.”

“Yes,” said the joker, “to ‘speak by the card,’ when we are within an ace of meeting hobgoblins, and the deuce is to pay, Tray will knock spots out of them.”

As we went into the house, I found in the man who had the key an old neighbor.

“Why, Mr. H——!” I cried.

He started nervously, and looked around in great surprise. “Miss W——!” said he, “are *you* here?—with those asking eyes of yours?”

“Oh, I don’t believe in it,” I laughed; “I am only curious, like the rest.”

Not so much then as since, I have thought of his strange look at me, and the shrug of his shoulders, which seemed to lift me off his mind, for he paid no more heed to me that night.

The others glanced here and there through the open doors, with an eager air, in marked



contrast with Mr. H——’s studied unconcern. They noticed his manner, and spoke of it.

“I never look about me in *this* house,” he said, gravely, “or in any of these old places,” he added, and hurried off.

The inquirer plunged down the steps, caught him on the first landing, and cried: “Why? Why not?”

Mr. H—— hesitated. “Well—you might look for the ghosts of the restless, roving folks who wandered to California,” he answered, and ran down.

As we stood in the hall, the believer made us a speech about being in a fit state, and urged that we should be placed in rooms by ourselves, or no more than two together. Though, after some wrangling, we were allowed a light in each room, we were to sit idle and not speak. I was left in a small room, with a window on the street. The others went where he told them. The silence which soon reigned made it seem as if there was no one in the house. Fearless as I had always boasted of being, a strange dread at last settled on me. I could not lose that feeling as of some one just at the door, which we know in vacant furnished houses. I tried to forget why we came. I counted, each way,



the figures in carpet and curtains. I noticed all in the room, the common and uncommon, from chairs, table, and sofa to a veiled picture and an old-fashioned secretary, whose torn green silk behind the glass doors showed some stray leaves of manuscript.

I wondered in which room the old owner took poison. Supposing it to be true, as some have thought, that suicide chains the spirit to earth, why should we know it? What right had we to pry into the unknown? I shrank from the test, and was seized with nervous trembling. Even my dog grew restless, and ran home just as, much to my relief, a late-comer entered the house.

He came in the room where I was—a shy, quiet young man, who went toward the window, but, suddenly seeing me, started, stared, and dropped into a seat. It struck me some way that he was in awe of me. I was half-amused to think he might be taking a stranger for a ghost.

Long we sat amid the shadows, silent and strange, as if both by some spell called up from the shades by the club. The oil-lamp burned dimly. I faintly saw my companion's glowing eyes, and fine profile, like that on antique vase or coin, and the small spray of



the breath-of-heaven's snowflake flowers that, with a blood-red pink, he wore as a button-hole bouquet.

The floor cracked like a goblin telegraph. The banisters creaked as if people were going up and down the stairs. The wind in sudden gusts rattled the tin roof till it seemed like the tramp of an army. But I heard with my mind's ear once more the passionate love-songs and snatches from operas which had of old so charmed me from this very window.

I could not keep my eyes off this man. Dazed, I looked at him. Where had I known him? I seemed flooded by a tidal wave of memories—of what?—bits of dreams?—sleeping or waking ones? Was it a tide of inherited memories surging through my veins with the hot blood of some ancestress who had, like me now, loved at first sight one like him, this man of graceful movement and head like an antique bust? Who could tell? I gazed at him, mad with vague, keen longing and remembrance, excited as with wine by the new and piquant charm of feeling the overwhelming power of his presence, yet seeing him wholly unaware of it, and even shy. I was under a spell subtle as the scent of the



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blossoms which nestled where I longed to lay my head, upon his breast.

When the hours of our fruitless waiting had passed, and we all stumbled down the winding, grass-grown steps, from starlight through shadow into the gas-lit street, I was dizzy with the intoxication of his glances, and lay awake the rest of the night. Who was he? One of this crazy club. I wanted nothing to do with them. I resolved not to join them again. But just as I had waked all night, I dreamed all day. This, then, was love, to look into eyes of such dazzling enchantment that all else became dull. I could do nothing but think of him. I envied the girls in the “Arabian Nights,” who could always send an old woman to tell a young man he was loved, and bring him. I longed for the freedom of the birds of the air, who are not held in check by the straight-jacket of custom which keeps us from blows or kisses at first sight. As the day wore on, I could not keep from going up there to look about in the light. The key had been left with me. I took it, but hardly meant to use it. I thought I would walk in the garden. The still, old place had an odd charm for me. San Francisco was gone; its hum sounded faint, like a distant sea; it seemed far off, as



if one of the vanished Five Cities of the Plain, to me on this hilltop, alone, with the fierce wind and dazzling sky, better comrades and more akin than the breathless, thronged streets and crowding buildings. The clouds floated near. The garden shrubs whispered their secrets. It was so solitary that, though the sunshine was over all, and an army of wall-flowers formed their torch-lit ranks round the door, there seemed to be no relief from a weight of loneliness. It seemed almost remote enough for Death to overlook. Was it haunted? The house looked at me with its pleasant windows, and lured me to go in. The sense of intrusion was too strong for me to go all over it. I went into the room where I sat the night before. I had not paused to mark the dusty gloom, or to feel nervous, when I happened to glance through the glass of the secretary. I bent to admire the writing thrust behind the worn green silk. I saw my own Christian name. I opened the doors. Fragments which had lain there by chance so long, plainly worthless, at the mercy of the next tenant, whoever it might be. I took them by right of my name of Rose. They were leaves torn from a note-book, mostly the record of a singer's daily practice; so many



minutes to these exercises or to those, or to songs, and so much time to French and Italian. But here and there came these entries:

Rose! sweet blossom in the wilderness of names, freighted with fragrance of lovers' vows folded in it, with hints of passionate meetings and farewells embalmed in amber moonlights, of dusky old gardens at nightfall, whose satin-cheeked flowers—wakeful, pale, and tearful, or crumpled, flushed, and warm, tossing in their dreams—all sigh their hearts out for the day who loved and rode away—for a Rose should have an ardent soul. She would not look at me now; but when skilled in my art, famous, rich—who knows?

. . . . .

This evening I saw her sitting in her window, looking lonely and sad, for her drooping head reminded me of a heavy-hearted flower. Could I but be her sheltering and supporting leaf! But I am like the ground at the feet of my Rose—no more able to come near her sweet lips, or touch her dainty hand! Soon her curtains were drawn. Into the moon-lit space between our houses, from the depths of my heart, I sang Fesca's impassioned “Maiden at the Window.”

. . . . .

I love her; but how can that serve *her*—the love of one with no wealth beyond his silver tenor and his golden hope. She might as well be the wild rose who blushes in lonely woodlands, her sweet soul unblest and unblest, and dies with no knowledge of bliss that might have been hers. She may never know of the kisses I long to give her. It is strange to think of our



cool unconsciousness of precious treasures of heart and soul in those around us whom we never know.

. . . . .

How hard is my fate! My mind is like a phantom battle-field, with this conflict carried on in silence—an awful, noiseless war, as of shadows; but, to me, what dread realities! Sometimes I think I *must* break my bond with my cousin. What a cursed fool I was to bargain away my freedom for the sake of her money, for study here and in Europe! But love was to me only a name. When I made that contract I had not seen Rose.

. . . . .

To see Rose sitting here before me, to hear her say, "I love you!" would be enough to come back for from another world. But what we miss here must be gone forever.

"We shall go down to earth,  
And be raised again from her;  
But there is no resurrection birth  
For the things that never were."

Sometimes I seem to live but to see her shadow on her curtain, her flitting form in the garden, or going in or out. Bliss and woe! Then I force myself to scales and exercises of the like sameness, that may dull my senses like a narcotic.

. . . . .

Last night, at my open window, I poured out my whole soul in the love-songs of Beethoven and Schubert. Edith supposed I was making out my hours of practice. The only neighbors near enough to hear may have thought me mad, but I did not care. I had



seen *her* lighted room grow dark; I knew my voice rang through her dreams. The nightingale singing to the rose, I thought; and was I not also leaning my breast against a thorn?

. . . . .

My God! What an awful feeling is jealousy! Three days ago, through our open windows, I watched Rose with a suitor. It was plain that he was wooing, and that she, though, it seemed, not much caring, still she listened. I thought of the “Malediction” from Halévy’s “Charles the Sixth.” My teacher, an old opera-singer, had told me how the spell of this fatal air followed the pointing finger of a tenor of the Grand Opera at Paris: now it was one of the audience who dropped in a fit; then he signed downward, and the shock was upon a carpenter under a trap-door; again, reaching up, a scene-shifter fell senseless. I burst into the solemn air. If ever such subtle influence worked, I meant it should now. I wished there could be poison in sound. I hated that unknown man. I willed him to lose his cause. I thought how Stradella’s heavenly tones in his own hymn, the prayer of a bruised and rueful soul, changed the minds of those who had come to slay him. Could I make mine evil enough to crush that man’s hopes? My song should be an alembic through which passion, hate, and despair could distill a strong and malignant force. I shook. I grew afraid of my own voice, of my own soul. The man rose as if unwilling to leave. I willed him to go. I quaked from head to foot. Cold drops beaded my brow. In the glass I caught sight of my uplifted, menacing hand, and of my eyes, which were strange to me, blazing with a fierce, inward fire, like those of a wild beast that



sees its prey. He went. I drew free breath. I felt as if I had been out of my body. And I did not find my voice for two days after. Can there be truth in the old saying that curses come home?

How can I bear to drift away with no anchor in her life? Oh, it is too, too hard. I have studied so long; I owe too much to Cousin Edith. I must keep on. But I must earn enough to pay her, and then, *when I return, I shall be free!* O Rose! shall I find you here the same? Heaven grant it! I go—to study, to sing, so Edith thinks; but *I—I am sure of but one thing; I go—to return. I shall come back!*

This was all of the journal. There was nothing else in the secretary, except a book of poems by the Countess Hahn-Hahn. Side by side with her "Playful Love" was pinned a page of note-paper, which bore the last of her verses, in a version made by the writer of the diary:

Must I die?—straight will soar  
 My soul above to thee;  
 And thou new life will lend,  
 New light to me. And I—  
 Could I with thee quite blend,  
 I should not fear to die.

Shall I with spirits keep?  
 No; though I soar, depart  
 As spirits heavenward sweep,  
 Yet th' heaven is thy heart.



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Thou wilt thy truant shield,  
And ever sympathize,  
And ope to him the field  
Of that calm paradise.

And then the portal golden  
Soft, softly close again,  
Where I, in peace enfolden,  
Shall ever rest from pain.  
As, of a morn, the bee  
In tulip lies apart,  
I sleep all hid in thee,  
Swayed of and in thy heart.

I was amazed at these bits of a shattered romance; for the writer had long been known abroad, and I had read of his being made court-singer for life in a far-off country. It was like too late looking down some charming road one might have taken. I sighed. Was my sigh echoed, or was it the sound of the swaying boughs of the old gum-trees? I could not stay. I ran home to think it over. I remembered the weird music which had so strangely mingled with my thoughts when I refused the man whom he saw. I was still lost in wonder over it when, in spite of my resolves, I joined the club at night. Neither my companion of the night before nor my old neighbor were there this time.



"This is a risky scheme," said the believer; "it is playing with edged tools."

"We fail to see anything," said the inquirer, "because visions must come without being evoked, as by the witches in the play."

"Shut off in different rooms," said the joker, "who knows which is witch."

"What I can not make agree with there being ghosts," said the learned-looking inquirer, "is this: Heraclitus says, 'Nothing is, but all flows; being is not a station, but a motion, a constant becoming.' So those out of the flesh are not the same as when in it. Always moving on, no one crosses the same stream or sees the same picture twice."

"Then," cried the joker, "debtor and creditor of yesterday lose that relation to-day. Owe, let us be joyful!"

"Buddha," said the doubter, "called the soul a current of states; when the mechanism goes to pieces, the soul is gone. It was only the mass of associations, experience, and memory."

"That," said the believer, "puts man on a level with a table or chair."

"Yes," said the joker, "let us be chary of that unstable belief."

"Life is a current of states," said I; "it is



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not in our frames, or in years, but in moments of bliss or woe, hope or despair, pain, disgust, strength, or weakness. Those who have not known ‘raptures and desolations’ have no spirit to come back.”

We were placed as before, but not without much dispute.

I thought of the odd folks now in these rooms, queer as the thoughts that lurk in the cells of a madman’s brain. I waited, like them, but not for the same reason. I was anxious for *his* coming, though I felt faint and ready to run home to shun meeting his eyes. What if he did not come? At the thought, a weight on my spirits changed the look of the room, as a cloud dulls the sunny landscape. With a thrill, a shiver of delight, I heard him enter.

As he stood for a moment, looking at me over the lamp on the table, the faint radiance making his statuesque beauty glow out of the dimness as if conjured by a spell, the scent of the breath-of-heaven and clove-pink in his button-hole might have been that of spices burned for an incantation. What was it I saw in those fine eyes? Neither scorn nor pity; they were kind, but full of an overwhelming surprise.



“Again!” he murmured; then kept the club rule of silence.

I was confused. I could scarcely breathe. My head whirled. I reeled to a chair. The flickering rays of the lamp danced about him, like my restless thoughts, while we waited. Waited? I forgot the club, the house, that I was in the city, in the world. I knew only that the man I loved sat before me. I could not love those who sought me. How was it that my heart leaped at a glance from this stranger’s eyes? Stranger? Had we not known each other from the first of creation? The king had come to his own again!

After even the little I had known of the club disputes, I was not surprised to see the pale young man shun the others when we all left. As we went out into the windy night, the well-known street and view seemed new. I felt as if I had left the real world behind; that, truly, one “lived” only in “raptures and desolations.” San Francisco, the club, were vague phantoms, dreams within dreams. I roused to myself at my own gate, with Mr. H——’s voice in my ear:

“Are these all?” he asked, looking after the members going down the street. And watching, with a pang of regret, their vanishing forms, I forgot to answer.



Then I cried: “Mr. H——, it has just come back to me how you urged my folks not to take that very house a year or two ago. Why did you do so?”

“I don’t want to see any one live in it,” he answered. “My friend K——, the rare tenor, used to be there. Poor fellow! He was to have married a cousin, whose money helped him to study music; but I have always thought his heart was elsewhere. She held him in a thrall, which wore upon him; and the voice, most frail of all instruments, is hurt by worry. His was, and at last left him. This shock, and disappointment, killed him.”

“Oh, I am so sorry!” I cried. “I never saw him, but I shall not forget his voice. In ‘Robin Adair’ it was like ‘the flute of the twilight wind.’”

“Yes,” said Mr. H——. “As I stood by his grave, I thought of what Antipater said over the tomb of Orpheus: ‘Here lies a poet; here lies a soul that sang; here lies the sound of the wind.’ He did not want to die, though he would say to me, ‘*Then* I shall be free!’ His cousin, a spiteful woman, seemed to hate to have him escape her control, though he did that whenever he sang. His voice raised a magic wall around him—we could only listen



afar. After his death, she said to me, ‘He has got away from me now—but *wait till I die!*’ with a motion that was a threat. She would not return here, and has been trying to have the house sold.”

“But why did you not want us to move there?” I asked.

“He once said to me,” Mr. H—— went on: “‘If, when I dream, I can see the old house, go over it, see *her* in the window across the way, may it not be that such pleasure, felt by me now through none of the nerves of sense, will be known to my spirit after I die? Perhaps, unheard, unseen, the two worlds blend, and we shall move along our old paths, with rare visions of the living, who will seem unreal and awful to us. I wonder if my soul could then affect one I loved, or must I be a flitting spectre with no power. We shall see.’”

“Then you believe——?” I began.

“I have no belief,” he said, quickly. “It seems to me nothing is too strange to happen,” unconsciously repeating the words of a club-member.

“No,” I thought, after he left me, “I should wonder at nothing after feeling this sudden deep interest in two strangers, such regret for the singer, and such absorbing passion for my



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companion of the last two evenings.” Why had I not asked Mr. H—— who he was?

The next night I meant should be my last with the club, shrunk this time to the inquirer and wife, and the joker.

“I half believe,” said the inquirer, “shadows are bound to go through tragedies whose scenes shift with no lookers-on, night after night, year after year, as if the hour could not forget, and would not let the place do so. It is the horror of Doom. But it is not for all to have it proved to them. Our inner sense has its bounds, like our other senses.”

The joker wound the great hall-clock, which began to work with convulsive gasps, as if it had been scared into silence. “Too frightened,” he said, “to cover its face with its hands.”

The small room where I sat had at once a charm and a sadness for me. I was filled with the vain desire to have known its old tenant. I wondered about the end of such strong passions as his. Can they cease here? Are they merely to brighten our path, like vivid colors in flowers and sky? In fancy I heard again the lovely tenor airs from “Lucia,” “Faust,” and “Martha” which had of old rung through this window. I thought of his



journal, and his translation of the German love-song. And I was haunted—haunted by two lines of Jean Ingelow's—

"I have no place on sea or shore,  
But only in thy heart."

But through it all ran the stronger under-current of longing for the coming of the pale young member of the club—a longing that made me blame my fickle heart, so touched by one stranger's love and grief, and just as much thrilled by another's sweet eyes; a longing that made me tremble, and made my heart, at the sound of his step, feel as if clutched by Fate, and nearly powerless to beat.

He started at seeing me, and, pausing an instant, murmured, "Once more!" and sank into a chair which stood back to the door; and again I was spellbound by his shy but ardent gaze, by the scent of the same sweet flowers he wore.

With none of my suitors, thronging like bees about the honey of my wealth, had I ever felt this tumult of emotion. I was glad of the club rule of silence. I could have thrown myself into his arms, but I could not speak.

What was the fatal enigma his eyes held? They had a mystic spell, as if they had seen



deeper than most eyes. Looking into them, my soul was lured down an unknown tide, on and on, voyaging through their unspeakable glory, with glimpse of a new world behind them, dropping through endless gulfs, till only by a fierce strain I turned my head away, blinded, breathless, dazed, and awed; for far down in those fathomless depths I touched eternity—I found the immortal—Love!

Sitting there so long, so still, it seemed to my strained nerves that we were like ghosts, and only the pictures on the wall had life and motion. The hall-clock groaned twelve times, but my watch lacked ten minutes of twelve. A cold draught rushed in as at the opening and closing of some of the doors. A nameless fear seized me. But a woman I had not yet seen with the club looked in at the open door, surprise, doubt, and scorn in her intent face.

A woman more to be feared than a ghost, I thought, as I marked her evil look. She paused in amaze at sight of us. Suddenly the dim light wholly failed. To be in the dark was to recall the errand here of the club. It could not be borne, even with others near me. After crossing what seemed an endless space, I reached the mantel, felt for a match, found one, and groped back to the centre-table.



As I lighted the lamp, I saw him watching me with questioning eyes, as if unmoved by the loss of the light or its return. I saw her looking in with a wicked smile. A jealous woman, I judged—all the more as she drew back before he could turn to find the cause of my changed looks. But he was curious enough to leave the room. Was she his wife? Was I bewitched by a man bound to another woman? Has each case its like? Was another man in this very house held in bonds? These questions perplexed me all night.

The next afternoon I went over to look for a favorite lace handkerchief, dropped in coming out with the club. I found it caught on a thistle, near the top stair. It was Sunday, and the chimes of Saint Patrick's Church came to me clear and sweet. Some of the words which are sung to the air they played ran through my mind:

“A realm of shadowy forms out yonder lies.

. . . . .

Faint sounds of friendly voices come and go,  
That seem to lure us forth into the air;  
But whence they come perchance no ear may know,  
And where they go perchance no foot may dare.”

I looked at the old house, longed and yet did not like to go in. But I knew none of the club



were likely to come until night, when they were to make their last visit—and as for ghosts, had we not tested it? What worse than to be haunted by vain yearnings after a different past, or to know a present not to be shaped by my will because a woman may not speak first. Perhaps I was to fade—the ungathered rose that cannot seek its lover's hand! Surely, if he felt as I did, he could not long rest without seeking me outside of the club.

I pushed in through the dreary hall. I passed on into the small front room. It gave me the same feeling of sorrow and regret. It was like the return from a funeral. How sorry I now felt that I had never known the people who used to live here! I had often thought, perhaps the friends we never meet might have been the dearest. I could not tear myself away. For the first time by daylight I looked from the window, which, to my surprise, had a full view of my own room across the way. They must have known more of me than I ever knew about them.

The house shook in the wind, as if stirred by unseen hands, but in the room all was still as if in a picture. There were the rusty nails and black moss in the grass-grown garden, and



stairs, as at the “moated grange”; but no fly buzzed in the window, no mouse squeaked in the wainscot, no bird chirped on the roof. Nothing moved but the clock in the hall, and the shadow of a gum-tree across the floor. My little dog and I sat still as statues.

As in the gloom of Gérôme’s pictures, ragged beggar and peddler, in the softened light of oriental canvas-covered streets, become grand and suggestive ideals, so in this dim, lonely room common things had a weird, unreal look;—the lounge took coffin-shape; the tall, narrow secretary loomed like a monument near it. I could fancy the veil over the picture stirred. The chairs gave sudden creaks, as if bearing unseen burdens.

I looked out of the window, and saw the buildings of the city far below stand out in the light of the sinking sun, with sudden sharp lines, as long-forgotten things start up in the mind of one dying. Why were my thoughts all of death? Then a line of phantoms of silent tunes, long since sung here, passed by my ears.

I thought of the surprise and dislike in that woman’s face the night before, and of what slight ground for jealousy she had, when he and I sat in such silence,—but recalling his



speaking eyes, my heart's quickened beating, and the flushes I felt mount my cheeks, I knew she had good cause.

I was vexed at myself, both for being here almost against my will, and for a nervous fear which had come over me when once inside the house. I would not yield to it. There was a scrap of paper on the table. I drew a pencil from my pocket, and tried to forget by writing about

#### THE GHOST OF YESTERDAY.

Faint in the cloudless sky yet shows  
The last night's moon, whose phantom white  
Has haunted dawn's pale-blue and rose  
With thrilling gleam of lost delight,

And lingers through the blaze of noon,  
Like Banquo's ghost at Macbeth's feast.  
Avaunt, O Spectre whose weird rune  
Appears to me when thought of least!

Though clouds from out life's sky seem furled  
By dazzling bliss, to me is clear —  
Far off and dreamlike — my own world  
Burnt out, my yesterday thus here!

A long-drawn sigh, which sounded close by me, made me look up. Bravely as I had tried to think only of the words I wrote, I was startled. My dog crouched at my feet and



barked. Had I left the front door on the latch? I rushed to see. Turning in the hall with the feeling of being watched, I saw a woman's head peering round a distant door. There was a familiar look about her. Thinking it must be one of the club, I started toward her, but she drew back and closed the door, which she held against me.

Was she afraid of me? I laughed, a little nervously, wrenched it open—but no one was in sight! I called, no answer, but, glancing up, saw the same head hanging over the banisters upstairs, and part of her dress. I was struck with something so wicked in her look that my little Spitz ran cowering and whining to the street-door. But, thinking I ought to explain my presence there, I went upstairs. To my surprise, the woman, without waiting for me, passed down the long hall and turned a corner.

I hurried after, thinking I might have frightened her, if she were a nervous member, and, in my haste, nearly fell through to the lower story, for at the turning yawned an opening where stairs had been taken down. My dress caught on a nail in the floor, and held me back just in time. As I freed my skirt, I saw that from the hall-window, just beyond the pitfall,



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my house could be seen better than from downstairs. A smothered chuckle, followed by a cry of rage, made me look down. The woman was watching me from below. There must be some other flight, I thought, yet found none, and went to the lower room, but she had hidden.

My verses, dropped as I ran out, were torn into shreds, and strewed on the floor. Thinking it was one of my dog's tricks, I felt I ought not to have brought him, that I must wait and excuse myself to her. I turned to look for him. What was this fluffy mass by the hall-door? Not my gay little comrade? This poor creature in spasms! Some evil power was at work here. Even that cruel-faced woman would be welcome company. I called. No reply. I tried to open the outer door, but it seemed barred by the rusty, large lock, to which there was no key.

I strove to be brave. I went through the lower part. The back door was fast. I thought she must have fled that way. It was awful to be alone there! I saw nothing strange, but felt as if dogged, doors opening behind me as soon as I closed them. I tried to think it was caused by the jar of my steps and the uneven flooring, but I felt the Bible



was right to forbid the calling of spirits. Had not the Ghost Club brought all this horror upon me? It made no odds that they had been searching to prove there was no such thing. There was the ugly story of the hanged man, whose body was dissected and his skull ground to dust; yet in the night the bits were seen to join, one by one, till the man was whole, and went out of the door.

I went back to the front room. Trying to forget my fears, I raised the gauze screen from the portrait over the mantel. It was not unlike the face of the strange woman! In my vexation toward her, I flung the veil against it again. The next instant, my elbows were fiercely gripped from behind. I was rushed swiftly toward the window I had opened when I first came in. My heart nearly stopped beating. Years of torture seemed crowded into that one moment. I was to be thrown out, to fall from that great height to the street. I shrieked in hopeless terror. I was suddenly cast on the floor, and, when I could look round, I saw that woman near the door, with her hard face turned as if to listen.

Some one was on the steps. She glided out, and was upstairs, as the front door, forced by stronger hand than mine, opened, and, to my



deep relief and joy, the pale young man came in. Braced by the relief of his coming, then I could talk to him. He only nodded once in a while, but his eyes again held mine. To my questions about the woman, he shook his head, and seemed surprised when I said, “She was here last night.”

So she had gone when he went out. I did not wonder she was jealous, as I stood there, hardly conscious of anything but the charm of his presence, and the scent of the bit of breath-of-heaven and blood-red pink he wore. And he—he kept the club rule of silence. But I thought I knew what he was thinking. I had not slept since I had last seen him. I passed the night watching, as I lay in bed, the old house—looming dim and large against the starry sky,—or, half-dozing, dreamed of flitting lights in the windows and echoing strains of music.

I had not slept for thinking of *him*. Fancying what bliss his kisses might be, waked me as fully as a real draught of wine. Heaven help me! And he knew it—he knew it; his eyes told me that.

Those wonderful eyes! They seemed so near and dear a part of myself, that I forgot we were, as the world goes, strangers. Surely we



had known each other for eternities. I forgot that it was not a woman's part to woo. I thought only of my love—my love, fierce as the wind, resistless as the sea, wide-spreading as the sky! I lost my senses.

"Where have you been all these years?" I cried. "We must have known each other before, for I love you, I *love* you, and it is no new feeling. My life has been a dream, a nightmare—at last I am awake! Do not leave me again, for I could not bear it. Stay! Stay!"

"Oh, if it might only be!" he murmured.

He came nearer, bent over as if to kiss me, when a white hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned in amazement. *She* stood beside him.

"*You!*" he groaned, with a gesture of despair, and reeled back. He grew, if possible, more bloodless than ever. I could see him tremble. Dismay and dread in his face, and a hunted look came into his eyes.

With a look of triumph at me, she beckoned him. Making a motion toward me, as of mingled farewell and warning, he slowly went after her, though often turning to look back. I followed. They passed along the hall, where my dog lay dead, out of the front door, and





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slowly down the long steps. At each landing he stopped and gazed back, then followed her into the dusk through which the members of the club were toiling up—among them Mr. H——, with a lighted lantern. They paid no heed to the figures going down, and were surprised at my wild agitation.

“Look! Look!” I cried to Mr. H——.

“Why! Your eyes have been answered!” he muttered, staring at me.

“What is it?” “Where?” “When?” “What happened?” “What’s the matter, H——?” urged the club.

“Let us get away from this house!” he cried, looking uneasily behind him, and signing to the doubter to lock the door. His hand trembled so that the lantern shook, as he said:

“I came over, in case any of you were here, to warn you. I have just heard Miss Edith L——, who lived here, died in Paris last night.”

“Last night!—at ten minutes of twelve o’clock?” I gasped, suddenly faint.

“Well—,” he thought a moment, “yes—ten minutes past nine there would just make it—how did you know of it?”

“Tall,—light eyes,—a set, stern face—not without malice?” I stammered.



“I thought you never saw her?” he said.

“Tall,—dark,—with a face like an antique bust,—divine eyes?” I went on.

“Then you *had* seen him,” said he. Struck by a sudden thought, he added: “Do you mean—can it be that you—how—where?”

I caught his arm. “See there!” I cried, pointing where the two forms—one looking up over his shoulder—had paused on the lowest landing, but now moved on. Could it be that my touch made him see as I did?

“My God!” he cried, his nerveless hand dropping the lantern. “Then I was too late!”

I sank, limp and helpless, on the top stair. The glare of the lantern on the club’s eager faces round me, with their various looks of wonder, doubt, content, fear, and pity; the jeering sound of the fog-horn; the shock of such an end to my romance; a keen sense of life’s “raptures and desolations,”—all made me hysterical, as I burst forth:

“You—you think——?”

“I *know*,” he answered, with awe-struck face, white to the very lips that could scarcely say the words, “*you* have seen the ghosts!”























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